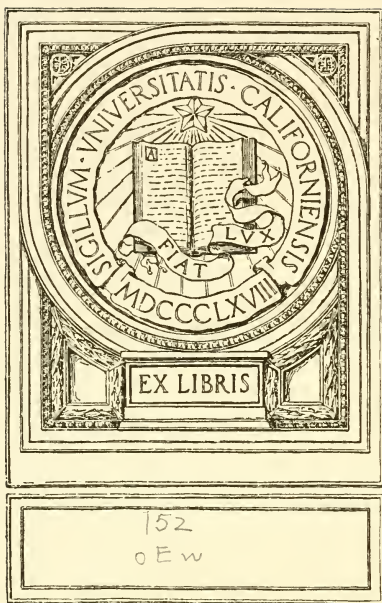
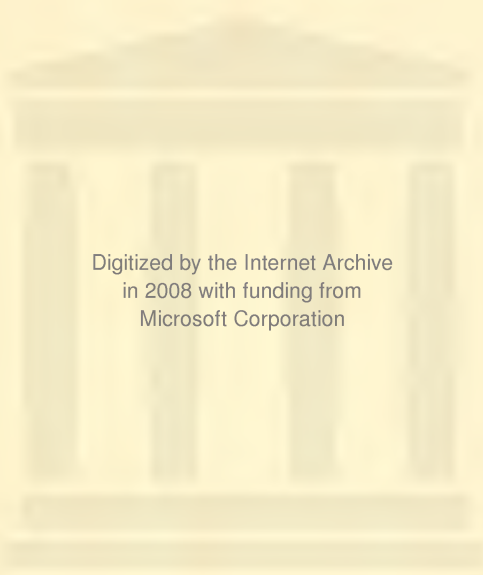








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THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER

IN ENGLISH VERSE

BY

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OF THE ILIAD OF HOMER, THE TRAGEDIES OF EURIPIDES, THE EPODES OF HORACE, AND THE
TALE OF THE ARGONAUTS: AND OF THE
LETTERS OF ST. PAUL.

THIRD EDITION.



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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THE interval which has elapsed since the second edition of this work was exhausted has been so great that I seem to owe an apology to the public for the fact that, in spite of a steady demand for the book, it has long been out of print. I was reluctant to bring out a third edition without first subjecting the translation to a thorough revision, conscious as I was of the existence of many defects in a work, the first half at least of which was produced in a fire of enthusiasm, and, owing to intense concentration, at great speed. For that revision I have now found time: it has not been hurried; and it has been as thorough as I could make it. Though the alterations are very numerous, I have not removed any of the essential features of the work, which gave it what freshness and originality my readers found in it; but I have endeavoured to remove all traces of carelessness, and of undue licence in rhyme, and to bring the version closer to the original; and have given special attention to the technique of the rhythm, recasting all such lines as did not seem to "read themselves."

VENTNOR,
1903.

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THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

BOOK I.

Now a Goddess came to the halls of the Isle-king, and
beheld the riot of froward men.

THE Hero of craft-renown, O Song-goddess, chant me his fame,
Who, when low he had laid Troy-town, unto many a far land
And many a city beheld he, and knew the hearts of their folk, [came,
And by woes of the sea was unquelled, o'er the rock of his spirit
that broke,

When he fain would have won for a prey his life and his friends'
return,

Yet never they saw that day, howsoever his heart might yearn,
But they perished every one, by their own mad deeds did they fall,
For they slaughtered the kine of the Sun, and devoured them,—
fools were they all.

So in anger their home-coming day did the God take away for their
guilt.

O Goddess, inspire my lay with their tale: take it up as thou wilt. ^{[10}

Now all the rest of the host, through the jaws of destruction
that passed,

Battle-buffed, tempest-tossed, were safe in their homes at last.

But the hero Odysseus only was kept from his wife and his rest
By a Goddess in duress lonely, Calypso the beautiful-tressed;
And she longed in her grotto-home to have him her husband for aye.
But at last, when the season was come, as the years rolled slowly
away, ^{[isle,}

When the Gods had his doom-thread spun to return unto Ithaca's
To his home, yet he had not won unto that sweet rest from his toil,
Nor yet with his friends was he, and with ruth were the Gods all
filled, ^{[stilled 20}

Save Poseidon, the Lord of the Sea, but his fury would not be

Against godlike Odysseus, before to his fatherland-isle he had won.
 But now to the far-off shore of the Aethiops Poseidon was gone,—
 The Aethiops, sundered in twain, of all men farthest away,
 These where the sun in the main sinks, those by the fountains of
 day,—

Where the bulls and the fat rams slain for the mighty hecatomb lay.
 There did he taste the delight of the banquet, enthroned thereat.
 But the rest on Olympus' height in debate with the Thunderer sat.
 And the Father of Gods and men to the rest of the Blessed began,—
 For his heart in him brooded then on the fate of a high-born man,
 Aegisthus, slain so late by Orestes, son of the dead,—
 And calling to mind his fate, to the Deathless the Thunderer said :
 " Out on it ! see how these mortals are wont us Gods to upbraid,
 Saying that trouble and sorrow from us are upon them laid !
 Yet they of their own blind folly have woes that were never or-
 dained ;

Even as Aegisthus now hath o'erleapt his fate, and hath stained
 The couch of Atreides, and slain him even as he entered his home,
 With vengeance full in his sight, for we told him of that which
 should come,

For we warned him by Hermes, the Slayer of Argus, the Watcher
 keen,

That he neither should murder the king of men, neither tempt the
 queen,

For that vengeance for Atreus' son should be dealt by Orestes' hand.
 So soon as he grew unto manhood, and longed for his native land.
 So Hermes spake, but the soul of Aegisthus would not give heed
 To the kindly warning : now doth he reap the reward of his deed."

Then unto him did Athenê the grey-eyed make reply :

" Our Father, Kronos' son, who dost rule over princes on high,

Yea, of a truth laid low in fitting destruction he is,—

So perish all other hereafter who dareth a-deed like this !

But mine heart for Odysseus the subtle of soul is riven in twain,

For the evil-starred, who hath long been suffering exile pain

In the sea-girt navel-isle of the measureless-wide sea-swell, 50

A forest-clad island it is, and a Goddess therein doth dwell.

The daughter of Atlas the weirdly-wise, who hath knowledge of all,

Even all the abysses of sea, and upbeareth the pillars tall

That keep the plain of the earth and the arch of the heavens
 apart :—

That daughter is keeping him mourning and sighing for anguish of
 heart.

And ever with winning and wily words doth the Goddess essay

To bewitch him, and make him forget his home ; but Odysseus, aye

Yearning to have but a sight of the smoke springing up through
 the air

In Ithaca, longeth to die ; but thou, thou dost not care, [60

Thine heart is not turned unto pity, Olympian !—what, did he ne'er

By the side of the ships of the Argives the fat of the sacrifice burn
In broad Troy-land? Why, Zeus, is thy wrath upon him so stern?"

Answered her Zeus, of whose hands the clouds through the welkin are swept:

"Daughter, what saying is this through the fence of thy teeth that hath leapt?

How shall I forget Odysseus, the godlike man, who is wise
Beyond all mortal folk, and hath done more sacrifice
Unto the deathless Gods who dwell in the broad-arched heaven?
But the soul of Poseidon the Girder of Earth hath never forgiven
The thing that he did to the Cyclops, robbing the giant of sight,
Polyphemus the god-strong monster, greatest in bodily might 70
Of all the Cyclopes; he of the sea-god Phorcys' daughter,
Thoösa, was born by the sound of the dash of the deep sea-water:
For in hollow caverns the Lord of the Sea to his breast had caught
her.

Since then, Earth-shaker Poseidon, seeing he may not slay,
Maketh Odysseus afar from his fatherland-shore to stray.
But come, let us that be here take counsel with one consent
How he may win to his home, and Poseidon shall then relent
From his anger, for surely he will not be able alone to fight
With us all, nor to take his revenge in the deathless Gods' despite."

Then unto him did Athenê the grey-eyed make reply: 80
"Our Father, Kronos' son, who dost rule over princes on high,
If this doth in truth seem good in the eyes of the Gods ever-blest
That Odysseus the subtle of soul shall win to his home and his rest,
Hermes then let us send, the Slayer of Argus, the Guide,
Unto where Ogygia lies in the midst of the lone sea-tide.
Let him there to the fair-tressed nymph our sure decree declare,
That Odysseus the steadfast-hearted back to his home may fare.
But I will away unto Ithaca's island, and there will I fill [will,
With courage the breast of his son, and will give him a masterful
That he to a folk-mote may call the Achæans with long-flowing
hair, 90

And before them may bid the insolent suitors all beware,
Who are slaying his sheep and his trail-foot wreath-horned kine
evermore.

And then will I send him to Sparta, and Pylos, the sandy shore,
Tidings to seek of the father he loveth, if aught he may learn;
And so fair guerdon of glory of men that son shall earn."

Then under her white feet tied the Goddess her sandals' pride,
Ambrosial, golden-gleaming, which bore her over the main
Swift as the winds far-streaming, and o'er earth's limitless plain.
And she grasped her war-spear strong, whose point with the keen
brass shone,

Ponderous, sturdy, and long, wherewithal are the ranks over-
thrown 100

Of heroes that kindle the ire of the Child of a mighty Sire.

From the crest of Olympus adown hath she flashed through the
voids of the air ;

And in Ithaca's land and town, by Odysseus' palace fair,
She stood by the forecourt door ; in her hand was the lance of brass ;
And a guest-friend's shape she wore, the Taphian Mentès he was.
And the suitors therebeside she found, and the dice they threw,
Sitting on many a hide of the kine that they lawlessly slew.
And the henchmen and serving-men were hastening hither and
thither ;

There were some that were mingling then the wine and the water
together ; [110

And with sponges of manifold mesh some washed the tables over,
And they set them forth, and with flesh in abundance the board
did they cover.

Then was godlike Telemachus ware of Athenê before the rest ;
For he sat mid the suitors there with a burden of pain on his breast,
Beholding his sire in his heart, ever looking to see him come
And scatter the suitors apart, and drive them afar from his home,
And, enthroned in his kingly pride, be lord as of old of his own.
So dreaming, the sad son spied a stranger unheeded, alone :
And he ran to the porch with speed, for his heart was indignant to see
How none to a guest gave heed : to the stranger's side came he,
And with greeting her hand he pressed, and the brazen spear did
he take ; 120

And thus to the unknown guest the son of the hero spake :

"Hail to thee, stranger : fair welcome be thine unto this mine
home !

First taste of our cheer ere thou tell us thy need for the which
thou art come."

Then Telemachus led the way, and the Goddess followed him ;
And anon in the hall stood they, 'neath the roof-beams lofty and
dim ;

Then took he the spear of his guest, and against a column's height
Placed in a javelin-rest, where many a spear gleamed bright
That in days of yore Odysseus bore through the storm of the fight.
And on to a throne he led her, a cunningly dight fair seat [130
And linen thereover he spread, and a footstool he set for her feet.
And a high-seat apart from the rest of the suitors he set in quiet,
Giving heed lest the stranger-guest, being vexed by their manner-
less riot,

No joy of the feast might have, in the midst of an insolent throng ;
And moreover some news would he crave of his father, lost so long.
And the bright spring water was brought by a maiden, and poured
from a ewer,

Golden, beautiful-wrought, into laver of silver pure
To wash withal, and she spread a table of polished sheen
By their side, and served was the bread by the stewardess modest
of mien,

With all things dainty to eat, given freely of all her store ;
 And to these all manner of meat in platters the carver bore. 140
 And bright on the board at their side did the golden chalices shine,
 And the henchman his office plied, outpouring the flame-flushed
 wine.

Then into the feast-hall pressed the suitors, an arrogant throng,
 And they sat them down to the feast on the high-seats ranged along.
 And water the henchmen poured, o'er the banqueters' hands was it
 shed,

And the maidens set forth on the board the heaped-up maunds of
 bread :

And the boys with the wine filled up the bowls, and they crowned
 each cup.

So they put forth their hands to eat of the things on the board that
 lay.

But when the desire of meat and of drink was clean done away,
 The minds of the suitor-throng unto other delights gave place, 150
 Even to the dance and the song, the banquet's garland of grace.
 And then did a henchman bring to the minstrel a beautiful lyre,
 For to them wont Phemius to sing, in despite of his heart's desire ;
 And his fingers swept the string, and the fountain of song 'gan flow.

Then to her of the bright grey eye Telemachus spake full low,
 Bending his head full nigh, lest the others should hear, and know :
 " Wilt thou have indignation, stranger, at that which my lips shall
 say ?

Pleasant to these men's hearts are the sound of the lyre and the lay,
 Lightly enow, for they feast upon cheer for which he must pay [160
 Whose bones, I ween, in the rain are bleaching and rotting away,
 Lying on land, or tumbled and rolled by the waves to and fro !

Ah, if they saw him returning to Ithaca's isle, I trow,
 For swiftness of flying feet would the rabble of dastards pray
 More fervently far than for treasure of gold and of gallant array !
 But now he hath perished, hath perished by fate most wretched,
 and we

Smile not, nor are glad, if men, any dwellers on earth that be, [day !
 Tell us, 'Lo, he is coming !'—ah no, but lost is his home-coming
 But come now, answer me this that I ask, and without fail say :

Who art thou, and whence among men ? Thy city and parents
 declare, [bear 170

In what manner of ship didst thou come, and how did the shipmen
 Thee unto Ithaca's shore ? What land do they boast for their own ?
 For I doubt thou hast scarcely come hitherward faring on foot and
 alone.

And prithee declare to me this in truth, to the end I may know ;
 Dost thou now first come, or art thou a friend of long ago [then.
 Of my father's ?—for many they were that came to our dwelling
 In the days overpast, for my sire had dealings with many men."

Made answer to him Athenê, the Maid of the flashing eye :

“As touching all this will I make unto thee an unfeigned reply.
 Mentès am I, the son of Anchialus wise and brave ; [180
 I am king of the Taphian folk, of the nation that loveth the wave.
 And now am I come, as ye see, o’er the wine-dark waters to you,
 Sailing to alien folk with my ship, even I and my crew,
 Unto Temesa sailing for brass, and of flashing iron is my freight ;
 And yonder my ship off shore afar from the city doth wait,
 In Reithrus’ haven, where Neius’ forests look down on the sea.
 And thy father and I, old friends, and the sons of friends, are we
 From the first ; for witness, go and enquire of the old man hoar,
 Laertes the hero : he cometh, they say, to the city no more ;
 But far away on his farm is he suffering trouble and care,
 With none save a handmaiden old his meat and his drink to pre-
 pare, 190

When weariness seizeth his limbs, as to and fro he goes,
 Cheerlessly creeping along the slope of his vineyard-close.
 But I came as looking to find him at home,—for so did they say,—
 Thy sire ; but the Gods are letting him yet from his homeward way.
 For Odysseus the godlike, not yet dead upon earth is he,
 But somewhere is prisoned still alive in the midst of the sea,
 In a wave-washed isle, and hard fierce men are his jailors there,
 Holding him captive and chafing sore in caged despair.
 But list to my prophecy now, as the Gods have spoken the thing
 Unto my soul, and this to fulfilment, I know, shall they bring, 200
 What though no seer I be, nor cunning to know bird-lore ;—
 Not much longer shall he be withheld from his fatherland-shore,
 Not though encompassed about with fetters of iron he be,
 He will find out a way to escape them, for manifold shifts hath he.
 But come now, answer me this, and without fail tell me all,
 If the son of Odysseus himself thou be, so goodly and tall.
 Strangely like him dost thou seem both in head and in beautiful
 eyes ;

For often and often we twain forgathered in friendly wise
 Or ever he passed unto Troy, whither many another beside [210
 Of the chiefs of the Argives in hollow galleys went over the tide,
 Since then hath he not seen me, nor I have Odysseus espied.”

Then unto her wise-witted Telemachus answered again :

“Yea, this will I tell to thee, stranger, in truth, and I will not feign.
 Begotten of him, saith my mother, am I, but I know not this
 Of myself,—there never was mortal that knew his father, I wis.
 O had I been sprung from a happier man, whom eld might have
 found

At peace in his home, with his friends and all his possessions
 around !

But he that is most ill-fated of all men on earth that be,
 Of him, say they, was I born, seeing this thou hast asked of me.”

Then unto him Athenê the grey-eyed answered again : 220

“Nay, but by grace of the Gods thou art come of a glorious strain,

Which yet shall be famed, since Penelopê bare such a son as thou.
But come, declare unto me, and unfeignedly answer me now :
What feasting is this ? what meaneth the throng ? how toucheth
it thee ?

A banquet ?—a bridal ?—a fellowship-feast it cannot be.
Overbearingly insolent seemeth their riot and revel to me
In the hall as they banquet ; in sooth, if a wise man hitherward
came
And saw it, his wrath would be kindled, beholding such deeds of
shame."

Then unto her in reply wise-witted Telemachus spake :
" Stranger, since thou dost enquire of this, mine answer take. 230
Once, ah once, this house might wealthy and princely have been
In the long-ago days, when he in the midst of his people was seen ;
But now those hopes by the evil resolve of the Gods are banished,
For he, by their doing, beyond all men is clean gone, vanished ;
For if that he were but dead, I should not be heart-stricken so,
If he with his comrades had been in the land of Troy laid low,
Or had died in the arms of his friends, when the toils of his warfare
were ended ;

Then had Achaia done honour to him with death-rites splendid ;
Yea, he had won great fame for his son for the unborn days.
But now have the Storm-fiends snatched him away, he hath left no
trace ; 240
He is gone beyond sight, beyond hearing, hath left me in anguish
to groan.

Yea, and it is not for him, him only I make my moan,
For another burden of cares have the Gods on my shoulders thrown.
For all the chieftains that rule in the islands lying around,
Dulichium, Samê, Zakynthus moreover, the forest-crowned,
And all the princes that dwell in Ithaca's rugged isle,
All these come wooing my mother, the house they devour and spoil.
And she neither refuseth the hateful marriage, nor yet can she end
Their wooing, and ever the wealth of mine house do they recklessly
spend ;

And soon these ravening beasts shall turn upon me and rend." 250

Then with indignant voice did Pallas Athenê reply :
" O verily sore is thy need that the far-away hero were by,
That the shameless suitors might feel the weight of his mighty
hand,

For if now he should come, and there on the house's threshold stand,
With his shield, and the lances twain, and the helm-crest nodding
grim,

The Odysseus of old, as he was when first I looked upon him
Drinking and tasting delight of the feast in our Taphian home,
When from Ephyrê-land, from Ilus, Mermerus' son, he had come ;—
For thitherward first did Odysseus his fleet-flying galley steer [260
In quest of the murderous poison his brass-headed arrows to smear.

But he granted it not, for the ever-abiding Gods feared he ;
 But my father gave him thereof, for he loved him exceedingly ;—
 Ah, in such guise if Odysseus amidst of the suitors were seen,
 Swift would the doom of them all be, bitter the bridal, I ween.
 But in sooth on the knees of the Gods lieth all whereof we speak,
 Whether or no he shall come back again, meet vengeance to wreak
 Here in his palace-halls. But I bid thee counsel thine heart
 How from thy doors the suitors to thrust, that the herd may depart.
 Now therefore, hearken to that which I say, and give ear to my
 rede :

[stead ; 270

To-morrow the men of the land summon thou to the folk-mote-
 And speak thou the word unto all, and call thou to witness the Gods.
 Bid the suitors to scatter their several ways to their own abodes :
 And thy mother, if so it should hap that to wed be her heart's desire,
 Let her turn again, and depart to the hall of her mighty sire ;
 And her kinsfolk shall order the bridal, and store of gifts shall array,
 Even such as befit when a princess in marriage is given away.
 And to thee thyself will I give good counsel, if thou wilt heed :
 Make ready a galley of twenty rowers, thy swiftest for speed,
 And go and enquire concerning thy father, long lost to his home,
 If perchance any mortal will tell thee, or heaven-sent rumour come,
 Such as speedeth with tidings to men, but is trackless as lightning-
 fire.

Go first unto Pylos, and ask thou of Nestor concerning thy sire :
 Thence unto Sparta, to see Menelaus the golden-tressed,
 Who of brass-mailed Greeks hath been last to find from his wan-
 derings rest.

If so of thy father's life and his home-coming feet thou shalt hear,
 Surely, howe'er woe-worn, thou couldst bear up yet for a year.
 But and if thou shalt hear of him dead, in the land of the living
 no more,

Thereafter turn thou again, going back to thy fatherland shore,
 And heap him a barrow, and all the befitting death-rites pay
 To his shade : to a husband then give thou thy mother away. 290
 But when thou hast done these things, and the work to an end hast
 brought,

Counsel thy spirit thereafter, and bid thy soul take thought
 How thou shalt slay these suitors by force or by subtlety,
 Ridding thine house of the spoilers : behold, it is time for thee
 To have done with the things of a child, for thy childhood is over
 and gone.

Hast thou not heard what glory the godlike Orestes hath won
 In all men's sight, by slaying the man that murdered his sire,
 How he gave to Aegisthus the treacherous-souled his iniquity's hire ?
 And thou, my friend, who art stately of form and goodly of face,
 Be valiant, and they that are yet for to come shall speak thy praise.
 But now must I hence unto where my good ship rocks on the sea,
 And where my companions, I doubt, are chafing with waiting for me :

But thou take thought, and let not my words be unheeded of thee."

Then unto her wise-witted Telemachus answer made :

" Stranger, in sooth right friendly is this that thy lips have said,
As a father might counsel a son, and thy words will I never forget.
But though thou be eager to sail, come tarry a little yet, [heart ;
Until thou hast tasted the bath-delight and hast cheered thine
Then with joy in thy soul and a gift in thine hand to thy galley
depart.

A costly gift and a fair for an heirloom shalt thou receive, 310
Even such as friends unto friends from afar are wont to give."

Answering then unto him did Athenê the grey-eyed say :

" Nay, hinder me not who am steadfastly minded to go on my way ;
And the gift that thine heart is fain to bestow, some other day,
When again I shall come, thou shalt give it me then, to mine home
to bear ;

Be it fair as thou wilt, it shall win thee a recompense even as fair."

So when she had ended her say the Goddess flashed from his
sight,

Like an eagle darting away, and she filled his spirit with might ;
And courage did Pallas inspire, and more than in days overpast
She awakened thoughts of his sire ; and, marking her vanishing
fast, 320

He thrilled with amazed delight, for he guessed that a Goddess it
was :

And so did the godlike wight to the herd of the suitors pass.

And the glorious bard was singing, and silently listened the throng
To the lay and the harp-notes ringing and seeming to wail with the
song

Of the heaven-sent griefs of the victor-chiefs and the home-track
long.

But the sound of the song divine to an upper chamber did rise

To the child of Icarius' line, Penelopê passing-wise ;

And down the steep ladder and long of the mansion the lady
descended ;

Not alone came she to the throng, but by handmaidens twain at-
tended. [330

So she came to the feasting-place of the suitors, that lady divine ;

And she stood by a column tall of the richly-carven hall,

Holding in front of her face her headveil dainty and fine :

And a trusty handmaid stood by the queen upon either side ;

And her tears brake forth in flood, to the bard divine as she cried :

" Minstrel, thou knowest full many another delightsome thing,

Stories of heroes and Gods, whose praises the minstrels sing ;

Sing somewhat of these, in the midst of the men as thou sittest,
and they [lay

Shall hearken the while they drink, but refrain from this mournful

Which breaketh the heart in my breast whensoever I hear it sung,

For with pain that I cannot forget my heart, my heart is wrung ;

Such a hero is he I remember and long to behold evermore,
Whose glory through Hellas wide-spreadeth from northern to southernmost shore."

Spake unto her wise-witted Telemachus answering :

"Mother mine, prithee why dost thou grudge that the minstrel
divine should sing [this

For our pleasure whatever his spirit doth bid him? No bards for
Are at all to blame, but Zeus is the author thereof, I wis,
Who giveth gain-venturesome men, unto each man after his will.
Be not wroth with the bard that he singeth the fate of the Danaans
still;

For ever that song hath highest guerdon of praise of men
Whose melody floateth around their ears unheard ere then. 350

Nay, let thy spirit endure to attend this heart-thrilling lay,
For it is not Odysseus alone that hath lost his home-coming day,
But many a hero beside did the battle and billow slay.

But thou, enter into the house, to the labours of woman give heed,
To the toils of the spindle and loom, and command thy maidens to
speed

Their tasks, and leave it to men to speak, and chiefly to me,
For mine is the lordship in this mine house, and the mastery."

And the lady, with wonder stirred, did back to the house depart,
And she pondered her son's wise word, and she laid it up in her
heart. [again; 360

So she passed with her handmaidens twain to the upper chamber
And there for the dear days dead and the love of Odysseus she wept,
Till Athenê the sleep-dews shed on her sorrowful eyes, and she
slept.

But the suitors with tumult and brawl were loud through the
shadowy hall,

Each claiming with passionate cries the princess's bridal-bed :
But to them Telemachus wise of spirit full dauntlessly said :

"My mother's suitors all, overbearingly insolent crew,
Now let us banquet in peace, make not this brawling ado ;
For in sooth 'tis a glorious thing to list to the high lay ringing
From the lips of a bard till it sounds as the Gods out of heaven
were singing. 370

But to-morrow we all will go and sit down in the folkmote-stead,
And there shall a warning from me unto you be openly said
To get you forth of my halls, and at other men's tables carouse,
Devouring your own possessions, and changing from house to house.
But if this thing seemeth to you more honest and fair to see—

On one man only to live, and devour his goods scot-free,
Waste on, and I will cry to the Gods that endure for aye,—
If Zeus will grant a requital for these your deeds one day.

Then, when ye die in these halls, shall your blood on your own
heads be." [heard,

So the brave young voice rang clear, and biting their lips they

Half wondering, half in fear, that stout and defiant word. 380
 But Antinous answering spake unto him, Eupeithes' son :
 " Telemachus surely, I trow, the Gods themselves have begun
 To teach thee to play the braggart, to speak thus hardily !
 May the Son of Kronos in Ithaca weltered about by the sea
 Not make thee king, which by right of thy father pertaineth to
 thee ! "

Then unto him wise-witted Telemachus answering spake :
 " Antinous, wilt thou be angry at heart for the answer I make ?
 I were well content if Zeus unto me this crown would give.
 Dost thou say that this is the meanest thing that a man may receive ?
 Nay, it is well with a man that is king, for so good store 390
 Of wealth cometh into his house, and himself is honoured the more.
 But in sooth there be lords of Achæan race full many beside,
 Both young men and old, in Ithaca washed by the girdling tide :
 Let some one of them have this, since Odysseus the godlike hath
 died.

But however it fall, in any wise king of mine house will I be, [me."
 And of thralls which the spear of Odysseus the godlike won for
 And to him did Polybus' son, Eurymachus, make reply : [lie,
 " Telemachus, sooth these things on the knees of the high Gods
 Who shall be king of Achæans in Ithaca washed by the brine ; [400
 But thou be king in thine house, and be lord over all that is thine.
 May the man never come who by lawless might shall tear from
 thine hand

Aught of thy substance, so long as Ithaca's town shall stand.
 But, mightiest, fain would I know of the stranger that came unto
 thee :

Whence did he come, and what land's son doth he boast him to be ?
 Yea, where is his birth-spot found, and the soil of his fatherland
 home ? [come ?
 Doth he bring any word of thy sire, as saying that soon he will
 Or hitherward journeyed the stranger moved by a need of his own ?
 How suddenly sped he away, and waited not to be known !
 No mean man he, but stately and goodly to look upon."

Unto him did Telemachus wary of wit make answer and say : 410
 " Eurymachus, utterly lost is my father's home-coming day.
 Tidings may come and may go, for I trust them no longer at all,
 Neither heed I the soothsayer's art, what though my mother may
 call

The seer and the soothsayer into her hall, of their lore to enquire.
 But this my stranger-guest is of Taphos, a friend of my sire,
 Mentès he is, the son of Anchialus wise and brave,
 He is king of the Taphian folk, of the nation that loveth the wave."

In subtlety so did he say, but his heart of the Goddess was ware.
 So they to the winsome lay and the light dance turned them
 there ; [should fall ; 420
 And they revelled throughout the hall till the shadows of even

And amidst of their riotous play the folds of the evening descended,
And each one thereafter his way to his rest through the gloaming
wended.

Looking forth on the courtyard-close, the beautiful pillared space,
Telemachus' chamber rose, high-built in a far-looking place :

And thither to rest he turned, deep-pondering many a thought.

In the room bright torches burned, which the leal Eurycleia had
brought,

An aged woman, the daughter of Ops, Peisēnor's son ;—

Of old had Laertes bought her, and wealth for his wealth had he
won ;

She was yet in the bloom of young life, and twenty oxen he gave,

And even as his own true wife did the master honour the slave, 430

But refrained, with a wise man's dread of the wrath of his wife,
from her bed ;—

Thus bare she alway the brands to his chamber, and loved him so

As did none of the maids, for her hands had nursed him years ago.

So he opened the doors that led to the chamber richly-dight,

And he sat him down on the bed, and his tunic he doffed for the
night,

And he tossed it unto the old grey nurse who was waiting there,

And she took it, and meetly did fold, and she smoothed it over with
care,

And she hung it on high to a peg that was nigh to the carved
couch fair.

Then, through the door as she went, with the silver handle-ring

She closed it, and home she sent the bolt with the leather string.

And all through the night, as he lay 'neath the rich soft fleece of a
sheep,

His heart was full of the way he must take, and he could not sleep.

BOOK II.

How Telemachus was defied by the suitors in presence of
the isle-folk, and thereafter sailed oversea.

THE grey mists flushed into red, and the Rosy-fingered shone,
And lightly upsprang from his bed Odysseus' beloved son ;
And he clad him, and flung around his shoulder his falchion keen,
And his beautiful sandals he bound fast under his feet's white sheen.
Then forth of his chambers he went, as a god were his presence
revealing ;
And straight his command he sent to the heralds with voice clear-
pealing
To call to the folkmote-stead the Achæans with long-flowing hair.
And the heralds did as he said, and the folk came gathering there.
But when all assembled were they, when thronged were the folk of
the land,
To the folkmote he hied him away with his brazen spear in his
hand. 10
Not alone went he to the place, but his fleet hounds followed his
tread,
And over him heavenly grace did Pallas Athenê shed ;
So stately his princely pride that all men were fain to admire.
And the elders moved aside, and he sat in the seat of his sire.
Then out and spake to the crowd Aegyptius, hero bold,
By weight of his years overbowed, but filled with knowledge untold.
Yea too, his beloved son with the godlike Odysseus' band
In the hollow galleys had gone unto Ilium the war-steed land,
Even Antiphus, spearman brave, whom the Cyclops limb from limb
Had rent in his shadowy cave, and had supped the last upon him.
But three sons had he beside ; with the suitors Eurynomus joined,
But two with their sire did abide, the toils of the farm-stead to mind.
Yet still of the lost with pain did he think, and with long heart-
ache ;
And his tears fell down like rain, to the folk as the old man spake :
“ Ithacans, hearken to me, and give heed to the word that I say.

Of us there hath been no folkmote, nor gathering, since the day
 When Odysseus the godlike in hollow galleys went sailing away.
 And now, who hath gathered us thus? what hopes have stirred
 him, or fears?

Is he one of the younger men, or of such as be stricken in years?
 Hath he heard any tidings at all concerning the host's return 30
 Which now he would tell us, as who hath been first thereof to
 learn?

Or comes he to speak aught else that to all the land doth pertain?
 He is good man and true, I ween; he is blest in his deed; may he
 gain

At the hand of Zeus all blessing whereof his heart is fain!"

Then Odysseus' son was fain of the omen, the well-wishing
 word;

Nor long did he silent remain, for he burned that his cause should
 be heard:

And forth in the midst did he stand, and the sceptre was given to
 his hand

By the herald Peisênor, who nursed wise counsels and deep in his
 breast;

And he spake: to the old man first the words of his mouth he ad-
 dressed:

"Old sire, not afar is the man, as thyself full soon shalt see, 40
 Who hath gathered the folk: above all men anguish encompasseth
 me.

I have heard no tidings at all concerning the host's return
 Which now I might tell you, as one that was first thereof to learn:
 Nor of aught shall I speak to the common weal that doth appertain;
 But the matter concerning myself, my grief and my house's bane.
 It is twofold; my gallant sire have I lost, who of old bare sway
 Over you that be here, and even as a father was kind alway.

But sorer than this, and harder to bear, is the evil thing [bring.
 That shall utterly waste my goods, and my house into ruin shall
 My mother by suitors unwelcome all is sorely beset, 50

Yea, the sons of the men the princes that here in our presence are
 met. [sought her,

None of them will brook to go, as though 'twere in honour he
 To the house of Icarus her sire, who would take bride-gifts for his
 daughter,

And would give her to whomso he would, whosoever should please
 him best; [rest;

But day after day they come haunting our house, that we find no
 And ever they slaughter our sheep, and our fatling goats and our
 kine, [flushed wine

And they banquet, but not on their own, and they drink the flame-
 Recklessly; wide is the waste, for here no hero we have,

Such as Odysseus was, from its ruin the house to save.

But for us, we are all too weak, and if we should essay the fight, 60

But a feeble folk were we found, all skillless of warrior-might.
 Oh, drive them away would I, an I had but the strength for this,
 For the deeds that are done are unbearable now, foul shame it is
 To see how my substance is ruined! Ye ought to be shame-stricken
 too,

And to blush in the sight of the dwellers around beholding you!
 And if ye regard not men, of the wrath of the Gods take heed,
 Lest they requite on your heads, being wroth for the evil deed.
 But I pray you by Heaven-throned Zeus, and by Themis that aye
 doth reign [again,

Over councils of men, who doth bring them together, and scatter
 O friends, forbear! Let me pine alone in my bitterest grief!— 70
 Unless it should hap that my father Odysseus, the hero-chief,
 To Achaia's well-greaved people of malice hath done any ill,
 For the which ye take vengeance on me, and in malice work your
 will [me

Setting these men upon me;—and yet of a truth it were better for
 If 'twere ye that devoured my cattle and store thus recklessly.
 For if it were ye that consumed, by and by were a recompense
 made;

Up and down through the town had we gone, and with passionate
 words had we prayed,

Demanding our own, until all that is ours were restored us again:
 But now on mine heart are ye casting a load of incurable pain."

Wrathful he spake in their ears, and the sceptre he dashed to the
 ground: 80

Forth burst the passionate tears: pity-smitten were all around.
 There was silence throughout the place, for no man upon him would
 take

To defend the wrong for a space, nor a bitter reply to make,
 Till Antinous' shameless face arose, and in answer he spake:
 "Telemachus!—blusterer, reinless in passion! what thing hast
 thou said [our head.

Striving to put us to shame?—thou wouldst fain heap reproach on
 I tell thee, thou canst not blame the Achæan suitors for this,
 But even thy mother,—right crafty and shiftful of wit she is!
 For now is the third year sped, yea, the end of the fourth is near,
 That she cheateth and mocketh the hearts of all the Achæans here.
 She leadeth on all to hope, and message on message hath sent, [90
 Promising this man and that, yet other is her intent.

Yea, this thing too she devised of her wiles, our hearts to deceive—
 In her bower did she set up her stately loom, she began to
 weave;—

Full! wide and fine of thread was the web;—and to us she said:
 'Youths, suitors to me, since verily godlike Odysseus is dead,
 Tarry, how eager soe'er for my bridal, until I have wrought
 A shroud,—for I would not the work of mine hands should come to
 naught,—

A winding-sheet for the hero Laertes, against the day [away, 100
When the baneful doom of the outstretcher death shall snatch him
Lest Achaia's daughters at me should in indignation be loud,
If he, after all his wealth, should be lying without a shroud.'

So did she speak, and lightly consented our lordly will.

So through the days at the great tall web was she weaving still ;

But at night she unravelled it all, with the torches beside her set.

Three years by her wiles were we baffled, and none mistrusted her
yet. [rolled,

But at last, when the fourth year came, as onward the seasons
Then one of her women, who knew full well, of her stratagems told,
And the while she unravelled the web we suddenly came on her
there ;

So perforce must she bring the work to an end, how loth soe'er. 110

But for thee,—even this is the suitors' answer to thee, and so

Thou shalt know it well in thine heart, and all the Achæans shall
know :

Even send thy mother away from the house, and bid her depart

To wed the man that her father commands, and who pleaseth her
heart.

But and if she shall still go on to breed the Achæans unrest

With all the lore that Athenê can pour into woman's breast,—

So cunning in beautiful work as she is, so prudent-souled

With craft even more than hath ever been told of the women of old
That aforetime amongst the fair-tressed daughters of Hellas were
found,

As Tyrô, Alcmênê, Mycênê withal, the beautiful-crowned,— 120

Proud names, but none of them all with Penelopê's wisdom wise ;

Howbeit, I ween, not good was this her crafty device ;—

Still will we eat thy substance, and still will devour thy store

Till thy mother shall change her intent, and shall know the coun-
sels no more [neth she

Which the Gods now put in her heart :—in sooth great fame win-
For herself, but bitter regret for the rich store gone for thee.

For not to our lands, neither elsewhither hence will we ever depart,
Ere she wed an Achæan, what man soever shall please her heart."

Then unto him wise-witted Telemachus answered again : [130

" Antinous, how should I thrust from the doors, or dare to constrain
The mother that bare me, that nursed me ? My father is far away,
Be he living or dead : it were hard the bridal gifts to repay

To her father, if I of myself should take on me to banish my mother,
Yea, ills should I have at her father's hands, and many another

Would heaven send down, for she, going forth of the house, would
call

The Vengeance-furies against me, and on mine head would fall

The indignation of men ;—I never will say this word !

But if by the thing that I speak your hearts unto anger be stirred,

Then get you forth of mine halls, and at other men's tables carouse,

Devouring your own possessions, and changing from house to house. 140

But if this thing seemeth to you more honest and fair to see,
On one man only to live, and devour his goods scot-free,
Waste on, and I will cry to the Gods that endure for aye,
If Zeus will grant a requital for these your deeds one day,
Then, when ye die in these halls, shall your blood on your own
heads be."

So did Telemachus speak, and far-seeing Zeus from on high,
From a windy mountain-peak, sent forth two eagles to fly.
Onward awhile they swept, the blast of the breezes along,
And anigh to each other they kept as they strained their pinions
strong.

But when they were right overhead the voiceful folkmote-stead, 150
Round and round in the air they wheeled, and their pinions they
shook, [look :

And down with a death-boding glare on the faces of all did they
And the cheeks of each other they tore, and their necks, till the
blood dripped down ;

Then suddenly darted they o'er the houses to right and the town.
And the folk at the fierce birds wondered, beholding the thing with
their eyes ; [should arise.

And with fear in their hearts they pondered what thing out of this

Out spake to the rest thereupon an old man, one of the seers,
Halitherses, Mastor's son, who was chiefest among his peers
In foreshowing of fates unto men, and in knowing the lore of the
birds ;

And he to the multitude then spake kindly-warning words : 160

" Ithacans, now, if ever give ear to the words I shall say,
And unto the suitors most chiefly of all do I speak this day.

For on them is a woe-surge rolling, and topples above them its
brow ;

For Odysseus not long shall be lost to his friends, but even now
He is near, and the seeds of death and of doom for the suitors all
Is he sowing ; yea, and to many beside shall mischief befall
In Ithaca's sunglow-land :—but let us give heed to restrain them
While yet there is time,—nay rather let them of themselves refrain
them,

Taking heed to their ways ; they shall straightway find it is far
better so ;

For I prophesy not out of skillless fancy : I speak that I know. 170

For I say that all his weird hath now been accomplished at last

As I foretold, when over the seas unto Ilium passed

The Argive array, and Odysseus the crafty went up with the host.

I said, out of manifold woes, and all his companions lost,

Unknown unto all he should come to his own in the twentieth year :

And behold, the accomplishment now of all these things is near."

Answered Eurymachus, Polybus' son, with scoffing reply :

"Old man, prithee get thee now to thine own home ; prophesy
 To thy babes, lest haply some mischief befall them in days to be.
 And herein am I better than thou in revealing fate's decree : 180
 ' Neath the beams of the sun there are birds full many that flit to
 and fro,

And not fate-boding are all ;—but Odysseus hath perished, I know,
 Far hence, and I would thou too hadst been ended along with him
 there ;

Then wouldst thou not go prating thy prophecies everywhere,
 Nor wouldst thou be hounding Telemachus on to wrath yet more,
 Looking to have some gift at his hands for thine household's store.
 But mark me, for this that I say unto thee shall be surely fulfilled :
 If thou, in the wisdom of old and in manifold lore deep-skilled,
 Practise on him that is younger, enkindling his anger the more,
 First, his lot shall be harder, his troubles more than before, 190
 And nothing at all shall his strivings avail him, for aught that ye
 say ;

And on thee will we lay such a m^ulct as shall vex thy spirit to pay ;
 Yea, dotard, and bitter vexation of soul shall be thine that day.
 And thus will I counsel Telemachus here in the midst of you all :
 Let him even send his mother away to her father's hall,
 And her kinsfolk shall order the bridal, and store of gifts shall array,
 Even such as befit when a princess in marriage is given away.
 But till then will the sons of Achaia not cease from this wooing here,
 How hard soever ye find it, for no man's face do we fear,
 No, not even Telemachus, wordy enow though he be : 200
 Nor yet do we reck of the prophecies, greybeard, spoken by thee ;
 For thy babbling shall come to naught, but thou shalt be hated the
 more. [store

And still shall he weep for his substance devoured, and see of his
 Nothing again, while ever she mocketh us, putting away
 Her marriage, and we, expecting and chafing from day to day,
 Wrangle for her that is peerless, and care not for any beside,
 Though many a maiden there is that might well be a hero's bride."

Out spake unto him Telemachus wary of wit, and replied :
 "Eurymachus, suitors all, puffed up with insolent pride,
 No more unto you will I pray, nor for justice to you will I call, 210
 For now do the Gods know this, and know the Achæans all.
 But come now, give me a galley and twenty men, that these
 On a quest, the desire of my heart, may speed me over the seas.
 I will go unto Sparta, and Pylos the sandy, there to enquire
 Of the home-coming track of my father, so long time lost to his
 home,

If perchance any mortal will tell me, or heaven-sent rumour come,
 Such as speedeth with tidings to men, but is trackless as lightning-
 fire.

If so of my father's life and his home-coming feet I may hear,
 Surely, howe'er woe-worn, I may still bear up for a year.

But and if I shall hear of him dead, in the land of the living no
more, 220

Then will I turn me again, going back to my fatherland shore,
And will heap him a barrow, and all the befitting death-rites pay
To his shade: to a husband then will I give my mother away."

So he, having made an end, sat down in his anger and grief:
And Mentor arose, the friend of Odysseus the princely chief,
Who, or ever he sailed oversea, gave his whole house into his hand,
That all should obey him there, and that Mentor should guard them
with care;

So with kindly warning did speak he out to the folk of the land:
"Hearken to me now, Ithacan men, I will utter my mind:
Never let king any more be moved of his heart to be kind, 230
Gracious, and swaying a sceptre in righteousness; nay, but rather
Stern, and an evil oppressor; for he that was kind as a father
And good to his folk, as though they were sons of his loins begotten,
Hath none to remember Odysseus now, he is clean forgotten.
But in sooth in the suitor-crew mine envy hath nowise a part
For the deeds of violence they do in their folly and blindness of
heart,

For their lives are they setting at stake as they spoil with a proud
high hand [land.]

Odysseus' house, saying, 'Tush, he will never come back to his
But now with the rest of the folk am I wroth, in that nothing we
do, [240

Neither stretching a finger, nor speaking a word, to check this crew
Of suitors, for all that so many ye be, and they so few."

And Leiocritus, son of Evênor, made answer to him straightway:
"Mischief-maker! infatuate! what hast thou dared to say,
Bidding them put down us? It were thankless labour and sore
If thou fight for a feast single-handed with heroes, and they many
more.

For if Ithaca's hero Odysseus himself were to come this day
On the suitors feasting his palace within, and himself should essay,
In his fierceness of wrath and his might, to drive them thence away,
His wife should not smile, howsoe'er she had longed for his face,
when he came, [250

But there in his hour of return should he die by a death of shame,
If he fought with so many as we; sheer folly is this thy rede.

Now scatter, ye people; let each to the things of himself give heed.
Halitherses and Mentor shall help this stripling forth on his way,
As is meet and right, for the friends of his father of old were they.
Ha, but I trow long time in the Ithacan land shall he sit,
Agape for tidings;—this journey, he ne'er shall accomplish it."

So the council was broken off, as the people thence he sent,
For even as the folk had come, so tamely returned they home;
And the suitors with laughter and scoff to the halls of Odysseus
went.

But Telemachus down to the sands of the seashore turned him
away ; 260

In the hoar brine washed he his hands ; to Athenê then did he pray :
“ Hear me, who cam’st to our house in thy godhead yesterday,
And didst bid me go in a galley over the misty sea,
Tidings to seek of the sire so long time lost unto me.

Lo, none will help me of all the Achæans ; nay, rather they thwart,
And the suitors most of all, in the malice and pride of their heart.”

So did he cry in prayer, and Athenê anigh to him came.
But Mentor’s shape she bare, and the sound of her speech was the
same ;

And she lifted her voice, and to him the light-winged words spake
she : [270

“ Telemachus, neither a coward hereafter nor fool shalt thou be,
If a drop of thy father’s spirit of might hath been shed into thee,
The spirit of him that was mighty in word and in deed to prevail ;
Then shall this journey of thine be neither in vain nor fail.

But and if thou art nowise Penelopê’s son nor Odysseus’ seed,
I look not to see the desire of thine heart become thy deed.

For few are the sons in sooth that are like to the sire, nay rather
The more part fall far short, and but few overpass their father.

But seeing that neither a coward hereafter nor fool shalt thou be,
And seeing Odysseus’ wit not quite hath forsaken thee,

There is hope that thine hands shall perform it, thine eyes the fulfil-
ment see. 280

Let be the suitors awhile in the path of their counsel to go—

Nay rather, their madness, for wisdom they know not, nor justice
they know ;

For nothing they wot of the death, of the black doom nought see
they

That aye draweth nearer and nearer, to perish all in a day.

Thou shalt not much longer pine for the journey, thine heart’s
desire.

So true a friend am I unto thee and thy godlike sire,

That I will provide thee a ship, and myself go with thee withal.

But now go back to the throng of the suitors that feast in thine hall.
Get ready victual for thee, and in vessels bestow it then,

Wine in the jars two-handed, and corn the marrow of men 290

In goat-skins deftly sewn, and with speed will I gather a crew [be
From the folk, of men that will offer themselves ; and galleys there
Many in Ithaca girdled with sea-wash, old and new ;

And out of them all the goodliest ship will I choose for thee,

And in haste will we rig her, and launch her forth on the broad-
wayed sea.”

So did Athenê say, the daughter of Zeus, and with speed
Telemachus turned to obey, when he heard the Goddess’s rede.

And back to the palace he hied, heart-gnawed by the old fierce pain ;
And there he beheld in their pride and their riot the suitor-train.

Ripping up goats were they and singeing swine in the court ; 300
And Antinous came straightway unto him to make them sport.
And he laughed, and he seized his hand, and he spake, in the midst
as they stood :

“ Telemachus, blusterer, reinless in passion, forbear to brood
In thine heart over ill word spoken or ill deed done any more ;
But prithee now, eat of the fat and drink of the sweet as before,
And be merry, for sure the Achæans thy friends shall supply thy
need,

This ship of thine and the chosen crew, and so shalt thou speed
For news of thy father away unto Pylos' sacred shore.”

But to him wise-witted Telemachus sadly and sternly replied :
“ Antinous, how should I bear, in the midst of your insolent pride,
To sit at the revel uncomplainingly, and be merry of cheer ?
It is nothing that ye in the days gone by have wasted here
Many goodly possessions of mine, and I but a young child then ?
But now am I come unto man's estate, and of other men
Hear counsel, and now in my breast my spirit is waxen great.
I will do what I may to deal to you all an evil fate,
Whether by going to Pylos, or working in Ithaca here.
I will go,—not in vain ; but my journey shall speed, of that no
fear !—

As a passenger faring, since I may not in mine own ship go ;
For ye will not help me, since ye have counted it better so.” 320

He spake, and indignantly tore his hand from the mocker's hand.
And they turned to the feast once more, that riotous suitor-band.
Loudly upon him they cried with scoff and with taunt and with
sneer ;

And thus in their insolent pride, 'gan one to another to jeer :
“ Surely Telemachus horribly plotteth to murder us all !
To Pylos, forsooth, must he go, from thence his avengers to call,
Or Sparta-wards,—who but he ?—so grimly in earnest he seems !
Or it may be to haste unto Ephyre's fair fat land that he dreams,
With a freight of man-slaying poisons joyfully thence to come
home,

Dash them into the wine-bowl, and deal to us all our doom ! ” 330

Then cried through the laughter-burst another with sneering lip :
“ And who knoweth but he, he too, as he rides in his hollow ship,
Shall be lost, like his father, afar from his friends and his native
shore ?

Then should we have more trouble of him than ever before ;
Even the task of dividing his substance, and giving his house
To this lad's mother,—or rather, to him that shall be her spouse.”

From their voices he turned him away, to the high-roofed cham-
ber to pass

Of his father, where heaped up lay the gold and the glittering brass,
And in chests was there raiment gay : much odorous oil there was.
And within the tall jars stood of the old sweet generous wine ; 340

With the grape's unmingled blood were they filled,—'twas a drink
divine—

Fixed in a row to the wall, till the day when Odysseus at last
Should return to his home, with all his wearifold woes overpast.
And to guard the stores there were folding-doors heavy-bolted fast.
And ever by night and day was the faithful stewardess there,
Who guarded and watched alway her treasures with sleepless care.
Eurycleia was she, the daughter of Ops, that handmaid old.
So into the chamber he brought her, and straightway his need he told :
" Mother, come fill me with generous wine some jars with speed,
Thy choicest next unto that which thou guardest with diligent heed,
Ever looking for him, for the evil-starred, for the coming home [350
Of Odysseus the seed of Zeus, escaped from death and from doom.
Fill for me twelve, and on all of them fasten the lids well-pitched ;
And then shalt thou pour me barley-meal into hides strong-stitched ;
And let it be twenty measures of grain that the mill hath ground.
Let no soul know it but thou, and let all together be found.
For at evenfall will I take them away, in the twilight hour
When my mother shall turn to her rest, and shall pass up into her
bower.

For to Sparta I go, and to Pylos the sandy, to hear, if I may,
Some news of my father beloved, some word of his home-coming
day." 360

But a shriek from her pale lips brake as his purpose the old nurse
heard ;

And with sobs to her darling spake Eurycleia the light-winged word :
" Why, why, dear son, hath thine heart this purpose ? how came it
to thee ?

And whither away o'er the dread wide world art thou minded to flee,
Our darling, our only one ?—He hath perished afar from his land,
Odysseus, the seed of Zeus, on an unknown alien strand.

And even with thy going thy foes will be plotting with wicked heart
By treachery to slay thee, and all this store amongst them to part.
Ah no ! but tarry thou here with thy goods : no need for thee [370
To rush on destruction, and wander forlorn on the harvestless sea."

But then unto her wise-witted Telemachus answering spake :

" Nay, be of good cheer ; with a God's good help this counsel I
take.

But swear that thereof to my mother beloved no word thou wilt say
Or ever eleven or twelve days end from my going away,
Or she fall in a longing for me, and hear I am gone and afar,
That she may not with tears unavailing her radiant loveliness mar."

So he spake, and the old nurse swore by the Gods an oath most
dread. [were said,

And so soon as the swearing was o'er, and the words of the oath
The sweet wine fiery-eyed into tall brown jars she poured,
And the skins right safely she tied when the meal therein she had
stored : 380

But back to the hall he hied, with the suitors to sit at the board.

But Athenê with eyes grey-gleaming had yet another intent ;
 For, like to Telemachus seeming, about the city she went ;
 And she stood by many an one, and to each her behest spake she
 To gather at set of the sun to the swift ship down by the sea.
 To Noëmon the glorious son of Phronius passed she, to crave
 A galley, and thereupon his swiftest he willingly gave.
 Then faded the sun's last rays, and shadowed were all the ways :
 And the swift ship down to the swell of the sea drew she, and the
 gear [bear. 390

She stowed, even all that the well-benched galleys are wont to
 At the harbour's uttermost bound she moored it, and down on the
 beach

The stout crew gathered around, and the Goddess heartened each.

But the Grey-eyed One furthermore must accomplish her fullest
 intent ;

And leaving the twilight shore to the hall of Odysseus she went.
 And she poured down slumber-dew on the banqueting suitor-train ;
 From their hands the goblets flew, and bewildered was each drowsed
 brain :

And they stumbled dazed through the town on their couches to lay
 them down ;

For the sleep-dews chilled their joys, and had quenched the revel's
 fire. [sire,

And, still with the shape and the voice of Mentor the friend of his
 Forth did the Grey-eyed call the son, and thus did she say,— 400
 Faint glimmered the stately hall as grand in the gloaming it lay—
 “Telemachus, come, for the oars are out, and the galley doth ride
 On the bay, and the well-greaved shipmen for naught but thy com-
 ing abide.

Let us make no stay, but forth and away o'er the rolling tide.”

Then Pallas Athenê led the way, to the shore as she passed
 Full swiftly, and after her sped the son of Odysseus fast.

So these twain came forthright to the ship and the whispering strand,
 And beheld in the dim half-light the long-haired shipmen stand ;
 And Telemachus' sacred might spake unto his trusty band :

“Hither, my merry men, ship we the victual, for all hath been
 brought 410

Together within mine hall, and my mother thereof knoweth naught,
 Nor yet of the handmaids any, save one that is ware of my thought.”

Then back to the palace he strode, and behind him followed the
 men : [then

And, returning full soon with their load, in the well-benched galley
 All the provision they stored, as the son of Odysseus said.

And Telemachus went aboard,—but Pallas Athenê led.

And forthright to the stern she gat, and there the Goddess sat :
 And Telemachus sat by her side, and the hawsers the men let go :
 And swiftly aboard they hied them, and sat on the benches arow.

And a fresh strong breeze from the west at Athenè's command up-
sprang 420
Clipping the foam from the crest of the wave o'er the sea as it sang.
And Telemachus called on his men to lay hand to the tackling-gear ;
And they right cheerily then to the words of his mouth gave ear ;
And they hoisted the tall pine mast, and they set it into its place
In the centre-block, and fast with the two forestays did they brace.
And they spread the white sail wide with the thongs of the twisted
hide,
And the sail bellied out with the blast, and the cutwater plunged ;
on each side [tide ;
Was the hiss of the foam flying past, and the roar of the sundering
And the ship flieth on through the dash of the surges running her
race. [place, 430
And the ropes of the galley they lash, making everything taut in its
Then crown great bowls with the wine, drink-offerings thence they
pour
Forth to the deathless divine blessed Gods that abide evermore.
And most unto Zeus's grey-eyed Daughter the honour they gave.
So o'er waves star-shimmering, dayspring-glimmering, onward they
drove.

BOOK III.

How the prince communed with the ancient king, and heard
tales of the war.

OUT of the rosily-flushing sea did the new sun spring, [bring
To the burnished heaven up-rushing, the light of his glory to
To the deathless Gods on high, and to mortals on earth corn-
growing ;

And to Pylos the ship drew nigh, to the city beautiful-showing.
And it chanced that the folk of the land even then did a sacrifice
bring,

Black bulls to bleed on the strand to the Dark-haired Earth-shaking
King. [there,

Great companies ranged there were nine, five hundred in each sat
And in front of each long line nine bulls for the offering there were.
They had tasted the sacrifice, to the God were they burning the
thighs, [10

When the galley ran in full sail, and her canvas the shipman-band
Did up to the yard-arm brail, and they moored her, and stepped on
land.

Came Telemachus down by the side of the ship,—but Athenê led ;
And the Goddess flashing-eyed thus first to Telemachus said :
“Thou needest not shame, Telemachus, more, neither shrinking
fear ;

For to this end over the sea hast thou sailed, of thy father to hear,
Where earth hath hidden his bones, and how he hath come by his
fate.

Come then, unto Nestor the tamer of war-steeds go thou straight ;
Let us see whether knowledge or counsel in that breast hidden may
be ;

And no false tale shall be his, for exceeding wise is he.”

Then wise-witted Telemachus doubtfully answered her there : 20
“Mentor, how shall I go, and in what guise make my prayer ?
Not yet am I skilled to know how the words of the wise should be
said :

There needs must be shame when the young man speaks to the hoary head."

Answered him Pallas, she of the steel-grey-gleaming eyes:
"Telemachus, some right thoughts from the springs of thy breast shall arise,

And others a God shall put therein, for surely, I ween, [have been." Overwatched by the grace of the skies thy birth and thy nurture

Then Pallas Athenê led the way, from the shore as she passed Full swiftly, and after her sped the son of Odysseus fast.

And they came unto where the throng of the folk and the seats were found. 30

There sat Nestor among his sons, and his henchmen around Were roasting collops of meat, and were setting more on the spit. And seeing the strangers stand, around them gathered the throng, And, reaching the welcoming hand, bade sit the feasters among. And the first that drew nigh these two was Peisistratus, Nestor's son ;

And he took their hands, and he drew them to soft fleece-seats, and thereon

Made them sit at the feast, while the tide to their feet in silver rolled, In the place of honour, beside his brother and father old.

And the sacrifice-morsels to each did he give, and the wine he poured Into chalice of gold, and 'gan reach it forth with the greeting word, Unto Pallas addressing his speech, the child of the Aegis-lord : [40
"Pray now, O guest. to Poseidon the king, as is meet and right, For that he is the God upon whose high feast ye have chanced to light : [an end,

And when thou hast poured the libation, and brought the prayer to Pass thou thereafter the chalice of honey-sweet wine to thy friend To pour : he too, I ween, to the deathless Gods doth pray, Since all men stand in need of the high Gods day by day. But, for he of mine age should be, and thou art reverend-old, Therefore to thee will I first reach forth the goblet of gold."

Then the chalice of wine with the word to the Goddess's hands did he reach : 50

And Athenê rejoiced as she heard that wise one's rightful speech, Because that he first should bring unto her the chalice of gold : And straight to Poseidon the King did she put up the prayer manifold :

"Hearken, Poseidon, thou Girder of Earth, and do not spare To bring unto prosperous ends these things that we ask in prayer. First unto Nestor and these his sons renown do thou give, And then may the rest of the people a recompense fair receive, Even all the Pylian folk, for their splendid hecatomb. Grant that Telemachus also and I may with joy go home, Having prospered in that which hath brought us in swift ship over the foam." 60

So did the Goddess crave, but herself was fulfilling her prayer ;

And straight to Telemachus gave she the double chalice fair.
Then did he her petition repeat, that son of a hero-sire.
And when they had roasted the meat, and had drawn all back from
the fire,

They divided to each his share, and they nobly feasted there.

But so soon as desire of food and of drink had been put from their
breasts,

Gerenia's horseman good, old Nestor, spake to his guests :

" Now is it seemlier, I wis, to ask of a stranger wight
Who he may be, when thus he hath tasted the feast's delight.
Who are ye, strangers, and whence have ye sailed o'er the ways of
the sea ?

70

Are ye such as fare upon traffic, or wander ye recklessly
Over the waves, as they that go roving, a pirate band,
Risking their lives, bringing bane unto others of alien land ? "

So Telemachus wise of wit unto him made answer again,
And boldly he uttered it, for Athenê heartened him then, [yearn,
That news of his sire he might learn, for whom did his heart sore
And might win fair fame and a glorious name with the sons of men :
" O Nestor, Neleus' son, the Achæans' glory thou,
Thou enquirest whence we be come, and behold, I will tell thee now.
From Ithaca come we, the isle overshadowed by Neion's peak : So
Mine own, and not of my folk, is the matter whereof I speak.
For tidings I come of my far-famed sire, if hear it I may,
Even godlike Odysseus, the steadfast-hearted, of whom men say
That he fought by thy side with the Trojans, and laid their city low.
For, as touching all the rest that fought with the Trojan foe,
We have heard where perished in mournful destruction each of the
men ;

But the son of Kronos hath hidden Odysseus' doom from our ken ;
Seeing no man is able to tell us for certain what time he died,
Whether on land borne down by the sweep of the battle's tide,
Or whelmed in the broken surge mid the sea-plains measureless-
wide.

90

Therefore we come to thy knees, and beseech thee now to declare
The mournful destruction that lighted upon him, if anywhere
Thou hast seen this thing with thine eyes, or hast heard the tale of
another

[of his mother.

That hath roamed :—for my sire above all men was born unto woe
Speak no smooth word out of care for my pain, or of pity now,
But frankly declare unto me, hast anywhere seen him, and how ?
I beseech thee, if ever my father Odysseus the valiant in fight
By word or by deed kept troth unto thee and covenant-plight
In Troy-land, wherein ye Achæans long time suffered woe upon woe,
Remember it now, I entreat thee, and tell to me all thou dost know."

And to him Gerenia's horseman Nestor answered again : [100
" Friend, since thou hast called to my mind the cup of the sorrow
and pain

Which Achaia's mightiest there to the dregs were constrained to
 Both all we endured in the ships on the face of the misty sea, [drain,
 When led by Achilles hither and thither for spoil roamed we,
 And all the fights that we fought round Priam's town in the plain,
 Till at last it had come to pass that our mightiest all lay slain :—
 There lieth Ajax the warrior wight, Achilles is there,
 There is Patroclus, whose words had weight as a God he were ;
 There lieth mine own dear son Antilochus princely and strong, 110
 Matchless in swiftness of foot, and good in the battle-throng.

Ah, many the ills beside that there unto us befell !

Who among mortal men the tale of them all could tell ?

Though thou shouldst tarry till five long years, yea six, were flown,
 And ask of the ills that the godlike Achæans there have known,
 Ere I had done thou wouldst homeward have wended, thy patience
 gone.

For nine years' space in devising mischief against them we passed
 By all manner of wiles, and Zeus accomplished it hardly at last.
 There never against Odysseus had any man power or will
 In counsel to match himself, for he had the pre-eminence still 120
 In all manner of wiles, thy father—if offspring of him thou art
 In very deed ; as I gaze, amazement hath filled mine heart !
 For surely thy words have the selfsame ring, and strange of a truth
 Doth it seem that the sage's speech should be found on the lips of
 the youth. [there,

Now the godlike Odysseus and I, through all the years we were
 Never in folk-mote or council of princes at variance were,
 But ever in spirit consenting, in wisdom of counsel one,
 Devised we that all in the Argive cause for the best should be done.
 But when the high-built city of Priam in ashes lay,
 We sailed in the ships, and a God dispersed the Argive array. 130
 Ah then did Zeus ordain a sorrowful homeward way [wrought.
 For the Argives, by reason that some of us outrage and folly had
 For this cause many an one to an evil doom was brought [eyes,
 By the wrath of the Mighty-fathered, the Maid of the fierce grey
 Who 'twixt Atreus' sons and the rest of the host made strife to arise.
 And the two kings unto a folk-mote called the Achæans all
 Recklessly, not in the order meet, for the evenfall ;
 For heavy with wine did the sons of the Argives assemble thither :
 And these twain wrangled concerning the matter that brought them
 together.

There Menelaus spake to the sons of Achaia his rede 140
 In no wise to tarry, but over the broad sea-ridges to speed.
 But it pleased Agamemnon not ; he would hear none other advice
 But to keep the people, and offer a hecatomb-sacrifice,
 To the end that from terrible wrath Athenê might so relent,—
 Ah fool !—for he knew not this, that her purpose would not be bent ;
 For the mind of the Gods everlasting not lightly doth change or
 repent.

So with hot wild words and bitter they answered each other like foes,
And the well-greaved host of Achæans with thunder of shouting
uprose,

And over division and strife did the shadows of nightfall close.
So in sleep hate-haunted and nursing of grudges the night-hours
passed ;

For Zeus was bringing destruction, our doom was approaching fast. 150
And at dawn some drew their galleys down to the mighty sea,
And our goods, and the spoil, and the deep-girt women therein
stowed we. [away,

But half of the host hung back from the sea, and they went not
By king Agamemnon, his people's shepherd, constrained to stay.
But the rest of us boarded the galleys, and sailed o'er the face of
the deep

Swiftly, a God's power lulling the restless billows to sleep. [burn,
And to Tenedos came we, and there to the Gods did our altar-fires
As homeward bound ; but Zeus not yet would have us return,
For he cruelly stirred up amongst us an evil contention again ; 160
So some on the backward track went sailing over the main :
With Odysseus the manifold-counselled shrewd-souled king were
they gone,

To show kindness again unto Lord Agamemnon, Atreus' son.
But I, along with the crowd of the galleys that followed me still,
Fled, for mine heart foreboded that Gods were plotting us ill.
Fled, leaving his comrades, Tydeus' son the warrior wight.
And late Menelaus the golden-haired followed after our flight ;
And in Lesbos he found us, debating the long home-voyage the
while,

Whether to stand out west of Chios' rugged isle,
Or in towards Psyria's islet, but still to the right of it bearing, 170
Or under Chios to sail, by gusty Mimas faring. [prayer,
And we prayed to the Sea-god to show us a sign, and he heard our
And he bade us furrow the midst of the sea, to Eubœa to fare,
The sooner to flee from the evil to come, from the ruin-snare.
And there sprang up a shrill-blowing breeze, and the galleys, in
swift-borne flight,

Sped over the sea-beast-haunted ways, and ran with the night
Under Geræstus, and there to Poseidon sacrificed we,
Offering bulls, in thanks for crossing the mighty sea.

And now was the fourth day come, when at Argos Tydeus' son,
Horse-quelling Diomed, anchored his galleys, their sea-flight done.
But I held on in my course unto Pylos, nor ever the breeze [180
Died, when once the Gods had sent it abroad on the seas.

So came I, and heard not of him, dear son, nor aught can I tell
Which of the rest of us 'scaped—who into destruction fell.
But what tidings soe'er, in mine halls as I sit, may have come unto
me [thee.

Thou shalt learn, as is meet and right, and I will not hide it from

They say that the Myrmidon spears on the home-track safely sped
 Whom the glorious son of Achilles the mighty-hearted led :
 Home came Philoctêtès withal, old Pœas' glorious son ; [190
 And Idomeneus safe with his hosts unto Crete their fatherland won.
 So came they safe from the war, and the sea swallowed up of them
 none.

But of Atreus' son thou hast certainly heard in thy far-away home,
 How he came, how Aegisthus contrived against him a wretched
 doom.

But verily he for his deed did a bitter requital receive.
 Behold, how good it is for a man at his dying to leave
 A son ; for Orestes it was which gave his iniquity's hire [sire.
 To Aegisthus the treacherous-souled, who had murdered his glorious
 And thou, my friend, who art stately of form and goodly of face,
 Be valiant, and they that are yet to be born shall speak thy praise."

Then unto him wise-witted Telemachus answering spoke : 200
 "O Nestor, Neleus' son, high glory of Argive folk,
 Yea surely that son hath avenged him : the sons of Achaia shall
 bear [shall hear.

Far and wide through the earth his renown, which the yet unborn
 But O that the Gods upon me would bestow so much of might
 That for outrage and arrogance foul I might yon suitors requite,
 Who with insolent scorn are devising against me mischief and spite !
 Ah me ! but the Gods with the threads of my life never spun such
 bliss

For my father and me ; and now must I patiently bear all this."

Answered him then Gerenia's horseman, Nestor the old :
 "Friend, since thou hast put me in mind, and of this thy trouble
 hast told,— 210

They say that because of thy mother many a suitor still
 In thy palace in thy despite is working his evil will.
 Tell me, art thus overborne of thy will, or have thy folk
 Been driven to hate thee by some dire word that an oracle spoke ?
 Who knoweth but he may return and requite their deeds some day,
 Either himself alone, or with all the Achæan array ?
 But O that Athenê the grey-eyed would so be a friend unto thee
 As when for the glorious Odysseus she cared so exceedingly
 In Troy-land, where the Achæans were harassed with woe upon
 woe,—

For ne'er had I yet seen Gods their favour so openly show 220
 As when Pallas openly stood by his side upon Ilium's shore.
 If she would show thee the love that of old to thy father she bore,
 These suitors should start from their dreams, and should think of
 the marriage no more."

Then unto him made answer Telemachus prudent in mind :
 "Old sire, not soon, I trow, shall the hope fulfilment find ;
 For a great thing and hard hast thou said : amazement my bosom
 doth fill :

Not for this would I hope, no, not though a God should declare it his will."

But Athenê with eyes grey-gleaming took up the word and said :
 "Telemachus, what is the word through the fence of thy teeth that
 hath fled? [230

With ease shall a God, if he will, bring a man from afar safe home.
 But for me, many woes would I suffer content, so at last I might
 come

Safe to my day of return, and might win to mine home again,
 Rather than lightly come back, on mine own hearth-stone to be
 slain,

As he by his wife's and Aegisthus' treachery wretchedly died.
 But from death, from the lot that to all men on earth must needs
 betide,

Not even the Gods can save a man that they love, in the day
 When the doom of the outstretcher death cometh on him and
 snatcheth away."

Then unto her wise-witted Telemachus answering spake :
 "Mentor, of this no more let us speak, though our sad hearts ache.
 Of a surety he shall return nevermore, but in very deed 240
 Already his death's black doom have the Deathless Ones decreed.
 But now am I fain that Nestor another story would tell,
 Seeing he knoweth the ways and the thoughts of men full well ;
 For three generations, they say, hath he ruled, and his days thrice
 told ;

Wherefore he seemeth to me as a deathless one to behold.
 O Nestor, Neleus' son, give an answer of truth, I pray :
 How died Agamemnon Atreus' son of the wide-spread sway ?
 Menelaus—where was he then ? and what was the death whereby
 The traitor brought it to pass that a mightier than he should die ?
 Was it not in the land of Argos, but wandering otherwhere 250
 That he found him, and gathered up courage for once, and slew
 him there ?"

And Gerenia's horseman Nestor answered the hero-youth :
 "Lo now, my son, I will tell, as thou biddest me, naught save
 truth. [true ;
 As touching what might have been, the thing that thou deemest is
 For if that Aegisthus alive, in the halls of the man that he slew,
 By golden-haired Menelaus, returning from Troy, had been found,
 Over his bones men never had heaped the sepulchre-mound,
 But the dogs and the birds had devoured his carrion above the
 ground,

Cast out of the city : no daughter of Greece to his shade had brought
 Solace of tears ; for a horrible deed was this that he wrought. 260
 For we were afar, achieving many a gallant deed :
 He, dwelling at ease in a corner of Argos the nurse of the steed,
 With enticing words strove ever the queen from her troth to win.
 In sooth, long time she refused to stoop to the shame and the sin,

For virtue and wisdom had not yet fled Clytemnestra's breast,
 And a bard was beside her, to whom full many a careful behest
 Gave Atreides, to guard his wife, ere Troyward he passed from his
 hall. [and to fall,

But at last, when the doom of the Gods had ensnared her, to yield
 Then that minstrel away to a desert isle bore he,

And left him there, a prey and a spoil unto vultures to be ; 270

And with joy the consenting adulteress home to his palace he led,
 And with fat of many a victim the fires of the altars he fed :

Many gifts hung he up of loomwork and gold the temples within,
 For the dread deed done, for the prize he never had hoped to win.

But we were sailing together, from Troy o'er the sea as we came,
 Menelaus and I, our hearts at one, and our purpose the same.

But when unto Sunium, Attica's sacred cape, we had won,
 Then Phœbus Apollo fell on the helmsman of Atreus' son ;

And he loosed a painless shaft from the string, and he slew the man
 Even as he held in his hands the helm of the ship as she ran, 280

Phrontes, the son of Onêtôr ; unmatched among men was he
 To steer the galley, when hurricane-blasts are wild on the sea.

So the king must needs tarry there, howsoever he yearned for the
 way,

Until he should bury his comrade, and all the death-rites pay.

But when now Menelaus at last, as he sped o'er the face of the deep,
 In his hollow galleys was come to Maleia's headland steep,

Then far-seeing Zeus made bitter his way, with a purpose fell ;

For he poured down upon him the blast of the winds and the
 hurricane's yell,

Lashing the waves and upheaving a measureless mountain-swell.

And he scattered the ships, and some unto Crete were constrained
 to go, 290

Where dwell the Cydonian folk, where Iardanus' waters flow.

And there is a smooth rock, sheer to the water descending down,

In the midst of the misty sea, at the verge of Gortyna town.

There, by the wind from the west, is a vast surge hurled on the rock
 Phæstum-wards, but the barrier breaketh the cataract-shock.

There were the ships cast : hardly the shipmen their souls delivered
 From death, but the ships on the reef by the breakers were dashed
 and shivered.

But the rush of the stormy winds and the sweep of the waters bore
 Five dark-prowed ships that were left away unto Egypt's shore. [300

So abundance of spoil and of gold by the hero was swept together,
 As he roamed with his galleys to alien peoples, hither and thither,

The while these horrible deeds by Aegisthus at home were wrought ;
 For he slew Agamemnon, and under his yoke were the people

brought.

Seven years in Mycênê the city of gold did the murderer reign ;

But at last, in the eighth, Orestes the godlike came for his bane,

Returning from Athens town ; and he gave his iniquity's hire

To Aegisthus the treacherous-souled who murdered his glorious sire.
 He slew him : thereafter a funeral feast for the Argives he spread,
 For the hateful unmotherly mother and dastard Aegisthus dead.
 On the selfsame day Menelaus returned to his fatherland-shore, 310
 And of gathered booty a mighty burden his galleys bore.
 And thou, my friend, not long from thy dwelling afar do thou roam,
 Forsaking thy substance and those proud men that are haunting
 thine home,

Lest in their arrogance all the things that are thine they divide,
 And devour them, and so shalt thou on a bootless journey have hied.
 First seek Menelaus : this is my counsel and this my command ;
 For he hath but lately returned unto Greece from a far-away land,
 From a country and people from whence one never would hope to
 win back, [track

If once the tempestuous winds should have beaten him out of his
 On to a great wide sea whence not in the self-same year 320
 Even birds return : it is measureless-vast, a thing of fear.

But now go thither with galley and shipmates over the wave ;
 Or, if thou wouldst journey by land, a chariot and steeds shalt thou
 have ;

And with thee shall go my sons, and shall bring thee upon thy way,
 Unto Sparta, wherein Menelaus the golden-haired bears sway.
 Thou pray him thyself, to the end he may tell all truth unto thee ;
 And no false tale shall be his, for exceeding wise is he."

Then the sun went down, and gathered the shades of the eventide ;
 And spake the Mighty-fathered, Athenê the flashing-eyed :

"Old sire, right fitly spoken are all these sayings of thine. 330
 But come now, sever the tongues of the victims, and mingle the
 wine,

That so to Poseidon and all the Deathless Ones we may pour,
 And betake us unto our rest, for now is it time therefor ;
 For already the light into darkness hath faded, and seemly is it
 Now to return, nor long at the feast of the Gods to sit."

So the Daughter of Zeus spake there, and they hearkened to that
 which she said.

And the water the henchmen bare, and over their hands they shed.
 And the boys with the red wine filled the bowls, till the brims were
 crowned,

And they served, till the guests had spilled the sacrifice-drops all
 round ; [libation. 340

And they cast the tongues in the fire, and they rose, and poured the
 So when to their hearts' desire they had drunken, to end the obla-
 tion,

Pallas Athenê then and Telemachus, godlike wight,
 Set their faces again to return to the ship for the night.

But Nestor with eager words spake out, his guests to recall :

"Now Zeus and the rest of the Gods forbid that this should befall,
 That ye should depart from mine house to go to the ship to lie down,

As though from a garment-lacking poverty-stricken clown
 Whose dwelling provided of mantles and rugs but scant supply
 Whereon himself and his guests for slumber might softly lie. [350
 Good sooth, but with me there be mantles and beautiful rugs enow,
 And the son of such as Odysseus shall verily never go
 To lay him down on the deck of a galley, so long as I live,
 Or after my death my sons be left in mine halls to receive
 Guests, and to all to my palace that come brave welcome to give."

Then unto him replied Athenè the flashing-eyed:
 "Yea, this that thou sayest is right, old sire, and befitting it is
 That Telemachus hearken to thee, for far more seemly were this.
 Now then let him follow with thee, to the end that this night he
 may lie

Within thine halls, but unto the swift black galley will I, [360
 To hearten my comrades, and tell them all that it needeth to do,
 Seeing that I am the one old man amid all the crew,
 But the others be younger men, that for love have followed with us,
 Of the selfsame age as the mighty-hearted Telemachus.
 There will I lie this night, but with dawn I will up and depart,
 Speeding my course to the folk Cauconian mighty of heart.
 There have I a debt that is due unto me, nor of late nor small.
 But as touching this my friend who is come to thy palace-hall,
 Send him on with thy son, and the chariot and horses give for his
 need,

Of all thine horses the chiefest in strength, the swiftest in speed."

So ended the Goddess her say, and Pallas Athenè was gone 370
 Like an osprey darting away, and amazement seized each one;
 And the old man marvelled to see that portent divine and dread,
 And Telemachus' hand grasped he, and, full of the wonder, he said:
 "O friend, thou shalt not be a dastard or weakling in life's full day,
 If now, in the days of thy youth, Gods bring thee upon thy way.
 For none other of all in the halls of Olympus that dwell is this
 Save the Daughter of Zeus, the glorious Triton-born, I wis,
 Who honoured thine hero-sire 'mid the Argives, years ago.

O Queen, be gracious, and goodly renown upon me bestow!
 For myself and my children and reverend wife I petition now; 380
 And I will offer to thee a broad-browed yearling cow
 Unbroken, which under the yoke no man ever yet hath led;
 Such an one will I sacrifice, and the horns shall be gold-overspread."

From the heavens right graciously bent Athenè to hear him pray.
 From the shore thereafter they went, and the ancient led the way;
 And his sons and his marriage-kin followed after the old man there.
 So when they had entered into the palace stately and fair,
 In order they sat them down upon couch and on carven seat,
 And for them did the old man crown with the mingled wine honey-
 sweet

The bowl, and rich was the scent of the grape's blood, ten years old [390
 Or ever the stewardess rent from the jar the lid-veil's fold.

So, mingling the wine and the water, with many a prayer he poured
 To Athenê, the mighty daughter of Zeus the Aegis-lord. [tent,
 And when, the libations done, they had drunk to their hearts' con-
 Away to his home each one to his rest through the gloaming went.
 And Telemachus went thereupon with Nestor, Gerenia's knight;
 And he led the beloved son of Odysseus the godlike wight
 Unto a carven bed 'neath the echoing porch that stood;
 And beside it the couch was spread of Peisistratus, war-chief good,
 In the halls of his father who tarried, as youths wont ere they be
 married. 400

And Nestor's queen the while the couch of the old king shared,
 In a chamber of that proud pile, which the hands of the wife had
 prepared.

Rose-fingered from mists of the night sprang Dawn, and the
 shadows fled;

And straightway the sacred might of Nestor arose from his bed.
 And forth of his hall hath he passed, and he sitteth in solemn state
 On the polished stone seats fast by the lofty palace-gate,
 White, with the oil's smooth sheen: enthroned on them once had
 been

Neleus,—whose words had weight as the words of a very God;
 But he, overmastered by fate, had passed into Hades' abode,—
 But Nestor now, of the land of Achæans the warder strong: 410
 And his sceptre he held in his hand, and his sons gathered round in
 a throng,

As forth out of chamber and hall Echephron and Stratius strode,
 Perseus, Arêtus, and tall Thrasybulus like to a god.
 Came Peisistratus after the rest, the youngest, stalwart and fair;
 And they brought and they seated their guest the godlike Tele-
 machus there.

Then unto these spake Nestor, Gerenia's horseman good:
 "Hearken, beloved sons, that the thing may be done that I would,
 That Athenê the first of the Gods I now may propitiate,
 Who revealed herself unto me at the feast of the Gods so late.
 Let one of you go to the plain, a heifer to choose for our need. 420
 That without delay she may come, and the neatherd may drive her
 with speed.

And let one go down to the shore, and hitherward bring the crew
 Of Telemachus mighty-hearted, and leave with the galley but two.
 Let another call hither the craftsman Laerkês the worker in gold,
 Who with beaten foil thereof the victim's horns shall enfold.
 And the rest of you all tarry here, and withal let the maidens be
 told

To ply in the palace their toils, and array the banquet cheer.
 Be the seats prepared, and the wood, and the water sparkling
 clear."

So they all made haste to obey: from the plain was the heifer
 brought:

And forthwith hasted away from the swift keel shapely-wrought
Great-hearted Telemachus' band ; and the smith from his forge did
depart, [431

And he came thither, bearing in hand the brazen tools of his art ;
With anvil and hammer came he, and the pincers of cunning mould
Wherewith ever craftsmanly he fashioned the beautiful gold.

And Athenê came down from the skies to accept the sacrifice.

And Nestor the grand old knight provided the gold, wherewith
In a sheath all glittering bright the horns were encased by the smith,
To be for the Goddess a fair and acceptable offering.

And Echephron and Stratius there by the horns did the heifer bring,
And, with lustral water in basin with figures of flowers wrought o'er,
From his chamber Arêtus did hasten, the while his left hand bore
The sacred grain in a maund : Thrasymedès stood by in his might
With the keen-cutting axe in his hand wherewith the heifer to smite :
With a bowl did Perseus stand : and the old man washed for the
rite ;

And the sacred barley he shed, and he cried to Athenê in prayer,
And he clipped from the victim's head and cast on the fire the hair.
And so soon as the prayer was done, and the offering of grain had
been made,

Nestor's stalwart son Thrasymedès drew nigh with the blade ;
And he swung it aloft, and he strake : the neck-sinew asunder did
fly, [cry 450

And the strength of the beast it brake, and the women with joyful
Raised sacrificial acclaim, each princess, virgin and dame,
And the old king's reverend spouse, as she stood by the rite divine,
The daughter of Clymenus' house, the child of a princely line.

And the beast from the green earth then they upraised, as it nerve-
lessly quivered, [severed ;

And Peisistratus, chieftain of men, the throat with a swift stroke
And the dark blood followed the stroke, and fled from the bones the
life.

And the carcase thereafter they broke, full orderly plying the knife.
And the bones of the thighs they cut out, and, doubly folding it
over, [they cover.

With the fat they wrapt them about, and with pieces of flesh did
And the sire laid all on the wood, and he poured bright wine on the
brands, 460

While beside him the young men stood with the altar-forks in their
And after the sacrifice, and the tasting of entrails due, [hands,
The rest into pieces they slice, and they run the long spits through.
So they roasted the meats on the pointed spits, and the roast they
withdrew. [daughter,

But Telemachus passed, in the care of the old king's youngest
Polycastê the princess fair, to the laver of steaming water.

And when she had bathed him, and bright on his limbs did the oil-
gleam shine,

In beautiful mantle she dight him and tunic woven fine :
And forth of the bath he hied him, in form like the Gods to behold,
And he sat by Nestor's side, his people's shepherd old. 470
And when they had roasted the meats, and made end of preparing
all, [tall

They feasted enthroned on their seats, and about them henchmen
Filled golden cups with the fire-eyed wine that rosily shone.
But when at the last the desire of eating and drinking was done,
To his goodly sons at his side Gerenian Nestor cried :
“ Bestir you, my sons, and yoke the fair-maned steeds, that so
Telemachus forth in the car on the way that he would may go.”

Cheerly the youths gave heed to the word that the old man spoke,
And they brought the horses with speed, and they put them under
the yoke. [480

In the car did the stewardess set the bread for the journey, and wine,
And such dainties as princes eat, who be fostered of Zeus the divine.
And Telemachus mounted upon the beautiful chariot then,
And beside him Nestor's son Peisistratus, chieftain of men,
Mounted the chariot seat, and the reins through his fingers he drew,
And he lashed the coursers fleet, and away and away they flew.
And, the stretch of the wide plain crossing, they left steep Pylos
afar. [car.

So all through the day they went tossing the jingling yoke of the
And the sun went down, and all the ways were o'ershadowed with
gloom ;

And they came in the evenfall unto Pheræ, Dioclès' home,
Whose father Orsilochus high descent from Alpheius drew. 490
There for the night did they lie, and he gave them the guest-fare
due.

When Dawn from her mist-veil broke with rosily-flushing light,
They put the steeds to the yoke of the chariot cunningly dight.
And forth they dashed to the sound of the porchway echoing round ;
And they lashed the coursers fleet : and with right good will they
flew.

And they came to the plains of wheat : now nigh to the goal they
drew ;

So swiftly the good steeds coming had journeyed through those two
days.

And the sun went down, and the gloaming shadowed the glimmering
ways.

BOOK IV.

How Telemachus had tidings of his father, and how the
suitors laid the snare for his life.

SO these unto mountain-pent Lacedæmon's ravine-land came;
And straight to the palace they went of Atreidès of wide-spread
fame.

Now he sat at a wedding-feast, for his son and his daughter withal,
With many a neighbour guest, in the music resounding hall.

Rank-rifting Achilles' son was waiting the bride to receive,—

For in Troy, long years ago, had he promised the maiden to give :
So now had the Gods fulfilled the thing that the fathers had willed,—

And the chariots were waiting then the bride with honour to bring
To the city of Myrmidon men whereof was the bridegroom king.

But a princess of Sparta he gave to be Megapenthes' bride, 10
His tall son, born of a slave when "The son of my sorrow!" he
cried. [holden

But from Helen the God's decree all fruit of the womb had with-
Since first she travailed, and bare one daughter exceeding fair,
Hermionê, lovely to see as Aphrodite the Golden. [king

So with neighbours and friends on that high day Menelaus the
' Neath the stately hall-roof sat with blithe hearts banqueting.

And the hall's dim rafters rang to the lyre-notes echoing round;
In the midst two tumblers sprang: through athlete-mazes they
wound,

And still as the minstrel sang did the lithe limbs flashing bound.

Meanwhile, in the porch belated, 'mid shadows darkening down,
The hero Telemachus waited with Pylos' prince of renown. [20

And there came one forth to see, Eteôneus the henchman true

Of King Menelaus was he, ever tireless his bidding to do.

Through the halls with the tidings he hied to the shepherd of
Sparta's folk :

Swiftly he strode to his side, and the light-winged word he spoke :

"Menelaus, fostered of Zeus, by the house-front yonder stay

Two strangers, and comely to see as the seed of the Gods are they.

Wilt thou that the steeds be unyoked and into thy stalls be led,
Or send we them on to another to give them welcome instead?"

Menelaus the golden-haired made answer with frowning brow: 30
"Eteôneus, thy father's son was never a fool ere now:

But this as the empty babble of some young child hast thou said.
Many a time we twain have broken the strangers' bread,
And now brought home, for a respite from evils to come we pray,
If Zeus of his grace will grant it—unyoke the horses, I say!
Bring thou yon strangers in to the banquet without delay."

From the hall the henchman darted: his fellows he called, as he
passed

And out to the porchway departed, along with himself to haste.

Then they loosed from the yoke with speed the sweating steeds of
the strangers,

And into the stalls did they lead them and tethered them unto the
mangers; 40

And they cast the spelt therein, and they mixed it with barley white,
And the chariot set they to lean 'gainst the house-front glittering
bright.

And into the palace the thralls led the strangers twain, and amazed
On the beautiful rich-wrought halls of the heaven-blest king they
gazed;

For with radiance as of the sun or the moon that walketh in light
Menelaus' mansion shone over all its stately height. [vels fair,

And when they had gladdened their sight with beholding the mar-
They went to the lavers bright and refreshed their bodies there.

Then forth of the baths they passed, and were sleeked with the
unguent rare,

And tunics about them were cast, and mantles warm to wear. 50

Then each sat down on a throne by Atreus' kingly son,

And the bright spring water was brought by a maiden and poured
from a ewer

Golden, beautiful-wrought, into laver of silver pure

To wash withal, and she spread a table of polished sheen

By their side, and served was the bread by the stewardess modest
of mien,

With all things dainty to eat given freely of all her store;

And to these all manner of meat in platters the carver bore:

And flashing back the light stood golden cups on the board.

And to them Menelaus the bright-haired spake the welcoming word:

"Eat of our bread and be welcome, and when ye have tasted our
fare, 60

We will ask who ye be that your father's image so worthily bear.

Yea, sure ye are sons of sceptred kings the blessed of heaven,

For never of baseborn sires such visage and form were given."

Then he took in his hands the roast ox-chine, and he gave it
them there,

The part that was set for the host himself, the honour-share:

And they put forth their hands to eat of the things on the board
that lay.

And so soon as the longing for meat and for drink was done away,
Thereafter Telemachus said unto Nestor's son full low,—
Anigh to him bending his head, lest the others his thought might
know—

“Behold, son of Nestor, who art to my soul exceeding dear, 70
The lightning-gleam of the brass in the halls of the palace here,
And the splendour of silver and gold, of the amber and ivory!
Sure like unto this the dwelling of Zeus in Olympus must be,
Fair beyond word,—amazement is on me at all that I see.”

Yet not so softly he spake but that King Menelaus heard;
And swift from his lips forth brake the wings of the flying word:
“Nay, dear my sons, with Zeus no mortal shall ever compare,
For his dwelling immortal is, his possessions unearthly fair.
But of men, I know not if any shall rival my wealth or no;
For 'twas after manifold pains, and wandering to and from. 80
That with galleys freighted with these in the eighth year came I
home.

Unto Cyprus, Phœnicia, and on unto Egypt's folk did I roam,
To the Aethiops, to Sidon, Erebbians far at the ends of the earth,
And to Libya, the land where the rams full-horned are brought to
the birth; [there:
Yea, thrice do the ewes in the round of the year bring lambs forth
Sheep-master and shepherd in that good land have enough and to
spare [milk sweet,
Of cheese and of flesh, and the pails are brimmed with the fresh
For without surcease is the white stream drawn from the swollen
teat.

But as I, amid far lands roaming, abundance of spoil did gain,
Ah me, my brother at home by the hand of another was slain: 90
By stealth unawares, by his wife's foul treachery murdered was he.
Therefore have I no joy of all the possessions ye see.

Yea, and your fathers, whoever they be, shall of these things tell.
For my woes were many: mine house the while into ruin fell,
Beautiful-built and filled with all things rich and rare.

Ah that I had but a third of the treasures that once were there!
And ah that the brave and the true were alive that died in the war
In Troy-land wide, from Argos, the nurse of the steed, afar!
Lost, lost!—and my heart aches sorely, and often I make my moan
In the halls that were bright with them once, where now I am
sitting alone. 100

And while mine heart with weeping a little I ease, and anon
I refrain, for the dreary pleasure of tears full quickly is gone.
But for none of the loved and lost do I so lament and weep
As for him whose memory maketh me loathe my food and my sleep.
For of all the Achæans was none that endured such measureless
weight

Of toils, as Odysseus dared and endured ; yet merciless fate
 Appointed him yet more woes, and a pain that I cannot forget
 Unto me for the friend long lost ; and we know not in any wise yet
 Whether he lives or is dead ; and doubtless for him they mourn,
 Laertes the old, and the wise Penelopê dreadfully forlorn, 110
 And Telemachus, whom in his palace he left a babe new-born."

Then the fountain of grief at the sound of the name of his sire
 'gan well, [fell ;
 And a passion of tears to the ground from the lids of Telemachus
 And his purple mantle's fold to his eyes was he fain to keep,
 Clutched in a trembling hold ; and the king beheld him weep.
 And awhile did his kind heart doubt whether yet he should leave
 him alone
 To remember his sire, till his grief from tears should have gotten
 relief,
 Or to bid the youth speak out, that the cause of his woe might be
 known.

While wavered thus his intent, ere the word to his lips had leapt,
 Out of the brightness and scent of her bower Queen Helen swept,
 Like Artemis fair to behold, like the Maid of the arrows of gold ;
 And behind her Adrestê came with a beautiful-fashioned chair,
 And Alkippê with broidery-frame, with the soft gay wools stretched
 there.

And a basket did Phylô bring of silver, the gift of the hand
 Of Alkandrê, the wife of the King of Thebes in Egyptian land,
 In whose stately palace are stored kings' treasures many and brave.
 To Atreidês, Egypt's lord two lavers of silver gave,
 Two tripods of brazen sheen, and talents of red gold ten ;
 And to Helen moreover his queen gave beautiful presents then ;
 A golden distaff slim, and a basket on wheels that rolled ; 130
 Silver it was, and the rim was a wreath of twisted gold.
 This brought Phylô her maid, of the fine-spun yarn brimfull,
 And across it the spindle was laid with its burden of violet wool.
 And Helen sat down on the seat with a footstool under her feet,
 And spake to the king with a voice whose ring was music sweet :
 " Menelaus fostered of Zeus, do we know what men these be
 That have come this day to our palace, and sit at the banquet with
 thee ?

Be it right, be it wrong, I must say it, needs must I, in any wise :—
 Never till now any woman or man have I seen with mine eyes
 So wondrous like—as I look, I am filled with a strange surprise—
 To Telemachus, son of Odysseus, the babe that new-born lay [140
 In the hero's halls, when he left them on that ill-fated day
 When, all for shameless me, the Achæans hied them afar
 Over the sea unto Troy, athirst for the mighty war."

Answering spake unto her Menelaus the golden-tressed :
 " Yea, lady, and now I discern this same which thou hast guessed.
 For here are Odysseus' feet, and Odysseus' hands are here,

And the glance of his eyes, and his head and his clustering locks
appear,

And it was but now that I called Odysseus to mind, and I spake
Of the manifold troubles and toils that he underwent for my sake ;
And lo, the bitter tears from under his eyelids rolled, [150
And he lifted and pressed to his eyes the purple mantle's fold."

And Peisistratus Nestor's son unto them full eagerly spoke :
" Zeus-fostered Atreus' seed Menelaus, chieftain of folk,
The true-born son of the hero he is, as thou hast proclaimed.
But wise and prudent is he, and his spirit within him was shamed
To be full of words, who but newly hath come to thy presence thus,
The while thou speakest, and sweet as a God's was thy voice unto
us.

It was Nestor, Gerenia's horseman, that gave commission to me
Hither to bring him ; for greatly he longed thy face to see, 160
To the end he may have some counsel for word or deed from thee.
For the son of a sire long-lost hath many a grief, when alone
He doth stand in his halls, and seeth defenders around him none,
As now Telemachus' father is gone, and he hath no friend [fend."
Among all the people to guard him from bane, and his cause to de-

Unto him did golden-haired Menelaus in answer say :
" Lo now, and the son of a dear, dear friend is come this day
To mine house !—the friend that for me full many a labour bore.
Yea, and I said that if ever he came I would welcome him more
Than the rest of the Greeks, if the galleys should bear us over the
foam, 170

By grace of Olympian Zeus far-seeing, unto our home.
I had given him a city in Argos, had built him a palace-hall : [all,
I had brought him from Ithaca's shore with his son and his people
And his goods, and had given him one of the cities round about,
Whereof I am king :—for the dwellers therein, I had driven them
out. [for ever

And there had we lived, and full oft had forgathered, and nothing
Should have come between us to mar our delight, or our love to
sever,

Till under the shroud of death's dark cloud our hearts should shiver.
Dreams—dreams !—for a God of our bliss did, I ween, with jealousy
burn,

And robbed him only, the evil-starred, of his day of return." 180

Then at his woeful word were the fountains of grief upstirred ;
For tears to the sweet eyes leapt of Helen of birth divine,
And with prince Telemachus wept Menelaus of Atreus' line, [grief,
And the eyes of Nestor's son were bedimmed with the rainfall of
For he thought of a dear lost one, Antilochus, gallant chief,—
By the son of the Day-dawn bright was he slain in his pride of
strength,— [at length :

And remembering him and his might he refrained him, and spake

" Atreides, thou ever wast named with the wisest of all mankind

By Nestor the old, what time soever we called thee to mind
 When we talked in his halls together, and asked one another of
 thee : 190

And now, if it may be, hearken to me, for it seemeth to me
 That pleasure is none to mingle our drink with weeping : the morn
 Shall serve for sorrow and wail :—yet surely I think not scorn
 To lament for those that have died and have passed through the
 shadow-land portals ;

Yea, this is the one poor honour remaining to wretched mortals,
 Even shearing of hair, and the tears that adown the wan cheeks
 run.

I too might weep for a brother, he was not the meanest one
 Of the Argive host,—but thou far better than I canst say,
 For never I met him nor saw him, the best of the Argive array,
 Antilochus, swift of foot and a warrior wight in the fray.” 200

In answer to him Menelaus the golden-haired began :
 “ Dear friend, all this hath been said as a right well witted man
 Would speak and do, and as one that is wise with the wisdom of
 age ;

Yea, such a man is thy father, and thy words therefore are sage.
 Easy to know is the seed of a man for whom hath been spun
 At birth and at bridal a happy lot by Kronos’ son,
 As now he hath given to Nestor within his palace-hall
 A life that hath softly paced to a calm sweet evenfall,
 With sons wise-witted around him, stalwart spearmen and tall. [210
 But, friends, from the weeping we made erewhile let us now refrain ;
 On our hands let them pour the water, and turn we to supper again ;
 And let us be merry to-night, and our cares shall return with the
 morrow ;

And then shall Odysseus’ son and I commune of our sorrow.”

So, bringing the water with haste, on their hands Asphalion
 poured,—

Menelaus’ henchman true, ever tireless his bidding to do,—
 And they stretched forth their hands to taste of the meats that lay
 on the board.

And Helen of birth divine took thought in the selfsame hour,
 And she mingled along with the wine a drug of marvellous power :
 Cares, sorrow, and wrath by the draught shall all be swept from the
 soul, [the bowl. 220

If a man of the cup shall have quaffed when this hath been cast in
 No tear for the rest of the day should adown on his cheeks be shed,
 No, not if before him lay his father and mother dead,
 Not even if full in his view his brother or darling son [thereon.
 With the pitiless sword they slew, and he looked with his eyes
 Such drugs of might, I ween, unto Helen the fair were known,
 Given unto her by a queen, Polydamna the wife of Thôn,
 Of the land of Egypt, where from the corn-giving earth drugs
 spring ;

Great store of the good doth it bear, and many an evil thing :
 And in leechcraft cunning is each of her folk above all on earth,
 For up to Pææon the leech do they trace their glorious birth. 230
 So when Helen the queen had stirred these in, and had bidden them
 take

And drink, she took up the word, and unto the rest she spake ;

“ Zeus-fostered Atreus’ son Menelaus, and ye our friends,
 Sons of men of renown,—seeing Zeus unto mortals sends
 Good things and evil alike, for that all lieth under his power,—
 Eat of our cheer as ye sit in our halls for one little hour.
 Be merry in talk, and a tale that accordeth thereto will I tell.
 Vain were it if I should essay the story of all that befell,
 The deeds of prowess strong-hearted Odysseus was mighty to do.
 But hearken to this that the hero dared, yea, carried it through,
 In the Troy-folk’s land, where Achæans were suffering woe upon
 woe :

For he wealed his body himself with many a shameful blow,
 And in guise of a thrall vile rags did he over his body throw ;
 And so did he enter in to the broad-wayed town of the foe,
 And, changing his outward semblance, like to a beggar did seem,—
 I wis, midst the galleys Achæan not so was he held in esteem !
 So he came to the town of the Troy-folk : they saw and saw not, for
 their eyes [guise,
 Were holden therefrom ; but I pierced the veil of his cunning dis-
 And I asked him thereof, but he baffled me ever with subtlety wise.
 So I brought him unto the bath, and with oil I anointed him o’er,
 And clad him in raiment : thereafter an oath of might I swore, [250
 That Odysseus’ coming to Troy in no wise would I betray
 Till back to the swift black ships and the tents he had won his way.
 And the hero revealed to me all the mind of the Argives then.
 And he went, but he slew with the long keen blade many Trojan men
 Ere with war-knowledge laden aback to the camp he hied him again.
 And a wail of the Trojan women arose for their dead, but full fain
 Was the heart in me, for already my spirit homeward yearned ;
 And with sighs from the folly by Aphroditê inspired I turned, [260
 The madness that drove me from fatherland forth in an evil hour,
 That made me forsake my daughter, forsake my bridal bower,
 And a husband matchless in mind, and in form fair manhood’s
 flower.”

Answering spake unto her Menelaus the bright-haired King :

“ Yea, lady, fitly and well hast thou spoken everything.

For many men’s thoughts have I learnt ere now, and the mind
 have known

Of heroes, and wide over earth my journeying feet have gone.

But never such marvellous deeds have I looked upon with mine
 eyes

As the soul of Odysseus fashioned, the steadfast-hearted, the wise,
 As the thing that the stalwart hero was mighty to do and to dare

In the axe-hewn horse, when Achaia's mightiest sons sat there 270
With gifts for the Trojans in hand, even doom and the death-des-
pair ; [God's, power

And thou drewest nigh,—but wast surely brought thither by some
Who devised for the Trojans glory, and not the fate-fraught hour,—
And godlike Deïphobus followed with thee as thou camest then,
And thrice didst thou pace round, feeling the cavernous ambush-
den ; [thou call,

And there by their names on the chiefs of the Danaan folk didst
Making thy voice as the voice of the wives of the Argives all,
The while that Tydeus' son and Odysseus the godlike and I,
There as we sat in the midst of our fellows, heard thy cry ;
And the hearts of us two leapt, and scarcely could we refrain 280
Either from going forth, or from calling in answer again. [fain.

But Odysseus held us in check, and he stayed us though never so
There of the rest of the sons of Achaia was none that stirred,
Save Antiklus, he was set upon answering the voice that he heard ;
But Odysseus saved us all, for he pressed strong hands on his lip,
Nor till Pallas drew thee away did he slacken his mighty grip."

Then unto him wise-witted Telemachus answering spoke :
" Zeus-fostered Atreus' son, Menelaus chieftain of folk,
The harder his lot !—all this could not his destruction avert,
No, not though in his breast he bore an iron heart ! 290
But now let us turn to our rest, and so shall we sink this night
Into the arms of sleep, lulled softly in dreamy delight."

Then Helen the Argive said the word to the handmaids, to go
And set in the porch a bed, and rugs on the same to throw
Dyed of the crimson red, and carpets thereover to strow,
And above warm mantles to lay, to cover himself withal ;
And bearing a torch went they from her presence out of the hall.
And forth, when the couch is spread, the henchman the guests hath
led.

So there in the porch away were their hearts into rest-land gone,
As the hero Telemachus lay by Nestor's goodly son. 300
In a chamber of that proud pile Atreides the king lay sleeping,
And beside him slumbered the while Queen Helen of robe far-
sweeping. [from afar,

The grey mists flushed into red, and the Rose-fingered smiled
And lightly upsprang from his bed Menelaus the mighty in war ;
And he clad him, and flung around his shoulder his falchion keen,
And his beautiful sandals he bound fast under his feet's white sheen.
Then forth of his chamber he hied : as a God seemed he to behold :
And he sat by Telemachus' side, and the thought of his heart he
told :

" Hero, what is the need that hath hither from far drawn thee
To Sparta the hallowed, over the ridges broad of the sea ? 310
Doth it touch thy folk or thyself ? prithee answer sooth unto me."

Then unto him wise-witted Telemachus answering spoke ,

And there is a haven good, where they run ships high on the shore,
Yet only to draw them water and launch on the sea once more.

There twenty heavily-dragging days did the Gods keep me,
And never the winds sprang up that breathe on the face of the sea,
And over the long sea-rollers speed the good ship on.

And now had the victual been spent and the strength of my ship-
mates gone, [to save,

Had a Goddess not looked with compassion upon me, and stooped
The daughter of Proteus the mighty Sea-ancient, lord of the wave,
Even Eidothea, for with ruth for my plight deep-stirred was her
heart. [apart,—

And she came upon me as I drearily strayed from my shipmates
For they wandered fishing around the desert strand evermore,
With bent hooks searching the waves, and the hunger upon them
was sore,— [shore :

And anigh me she drew, and she spake to me there on the lonely
' Art thou so utterly mad, O stranger, or slack of thy wit,
Or art thou reckless, and happy in suffering dost thou sit, [370
That all this time in the isle thou art prisoned, and canst not deliver
Thy life from the snare, and fainter the soul of thy mates groweth
ever ? '

So did she speak, and answer I made full heavily :

' What Goddess soever thou art, I will tell my trouble to thee.
Nowise of my will am I prisoned, but haply offence hath been given
By me unto one of the Deathless that dwell in the broad-arched
heaven.

But, seeing the Gods know all, I pray thee, Goddess, to say [stay,
Of which of the Gods am I fettered and here am constrained to
And may not pass over the fish-fraught sea on mine homeward
way.'

So did I speak, and straightway answered the Goddess divine :
' Stranger, this will I tell thee, and true shall this word be of mine.
The soothfast grey Sea-ancient hitherward useth to come : [380
Known unto him are all the depths of the halls of foam,
Deathless Egyptian Proteus, Poseidon the Earth-shaker's thrall,—
And indeed they say he begat me, and him my father they call.
Now if thou couldst lie in ambush, and once lay hold upon him,
He should tell thee thy way, and the measures of all that sea-track
dim, [swim,—

And the home-path over the sea where the folk of the fish-world
Yea, tell thee, thou fostered of Zeus, whatsoever thy spirit would,
Even whatsoe'er hath been wrought in thy halls of evil and good
While thou art afar on a measureless track o'er the troublous flood.'

So did the Goddess speak, and answer to her I made : [390
' Bethink thee thyself how the snare for the Ancient divine shall be
laid,

Lest he see me, or know it before, and lightly escape our hands,
For hard were the task to quell a God with a mortal's bands.'

So did I speak, and straightway answered the Goddess divine :
 'Stranger, this will I tell thee, and true shall this word be of mine.
 What time the sun shall have climbed to the midnoon height of the
 skies,

Then the soothfast grey Sea-ancient out of the brine doth arise
 With the west wind's breath from under a shiver of darkling waves,
 Passing forth of the sea to lay him down in the vaulted caves. 400
 And around him the seal-herd, the brood that fair Halosydne bore,
 Sleep in a throng, having risen out of the sea-surf hoar,
 With their bodies areek with the evil smell of the fathomless sea.
 And' so soon as the dayspring is risen, thither will I lead thee.
 There will I couch you in order,—now choose thou out of the rest
 Three of thy men that thou know'st in the well-benched ships for
 thy best.

And all the guile of the Ancient will I unto thee uncover :
 First will he number the seals, and the tale of them all go over.
 And so soon as his fingers have reckoned them up, and he knoweth
 the number, [slumber. 410
 In the midst, as a shepherd amidst of his sheep, shall he lay him to
 But as soon as ye see that the God is fallen on deep sleep, then
 Rouse up the strength and the daring within you, and quit you like
 men. [and spring.

Seize him and hold, though he madden to 'scape, though he plunge
 He will pass into every shape, and to semblance of everything
 That moveth on earth, and in water shall fleet, and in fire shall roar ;
 But hold him unflinchingly still, and constrain him only the more.
 But when in his own true shape he shall question you with words,
 Even like as ye saw him lying amidst of the sea-born herds,
 Refrain from your violence then, and set the Ancient free,
 Hero, and ask what God it is that harasseth thee, 420
 And withal concerning the home-track over the fish-fraught sea.'

So having spoken, she plunged in the mountain-surging flood.
 But I went back unto where on the sands the galleys stood,
 And with many a thought as I went did mine heart full darkly
 brood.

But when I was come to my ship as she lay by the hoar surf-line,
 We dressed our supper, and over us came the night divine.
 And there we slept where the ripples crept to the murmuring shore,
 Till, rosy-fingered, the sweet Dawn lingered mid mists no more.
 Forthwith then to the strand of the broad-wayed sea did I speed
 With many a prayer to the Gods: three mates with me did I lead
 In whom I trusted most for every venturous deed. [430

Into the heart of the mid-wave hollows down plunged she,
 And four seal-skins she brought in her hands from the depths of
 the sea, [planned,
 And all had been newly flayed,—so the snare for her father she
 And she scooped for us beds trenchwise by the surf in the ribbed
 sea-sand.

And she sat there, and waited for us, and anigh unto her we drew,
 And she couched us, and o'er each man the skin of a seal she threw.
 But a horrible ambush for us had been there, for stifled were we
 With the foul sick strangling stench of the fosterlings of the sea,—
 For who could endure to lie down with a beast of the briny deep?
 But the Goddess devised a refreshing, our spirits from bane to keep,
 For she laid ambrosia beneath the nostrils of every one,
 And before its delicious breathing the reek of the sea-beast was
 gone. [stay.]

There all through the morning with patiently-biding heart did we
 And the seals from the brine rose upward in throngs, and thereafter
 they lay,

Row upon row, to sleep by the sea-surf's dashing sound.

And at high noon rose the Ancient out of the brine, and he found
 The huge-grown seals, and he went over all, and he reckoned the
 tale, [avail]

And he counted us first with the beasts, nor aught did his cunning
 To discern the cheat, and thereafter he laid him the sea-flock among.
 Then shouting we rushed upon him, and round him our arms we
 flung. [feign ;]

Then the Ancient forgot not his wisdom, the craft that was mighty to
 But first he became a lion wild-tossing the flame of his mane,
 And thereafter a dragon, a panther, and lo, 'twas a boar tusk-clash-
 ing,— [plashing !]

'Twas a tree high-waving its leaves—it was water rippling and
 But ever with heart unbaffled that shifting shape did we strain,
 Till the Ancient sorcery-wise grew weary, and needs must refrain,
 And then in his own shape uttered the word for the which I was fain :
 ' Which of the Gods was it, Atreus' son, this counsel that gave
 To take me by ambush perforce, and what is the thing thou dost
 crave ?' 460

So did he speak, and I uttered my voice, and to him I replied :
 'Ancient, thou knowest—and why dost thou speak but to turn me
 aside ?—

How long in the isle I am prisoned, and naught I can do availeth,
 For I cannot escape ; my strength is fleeting, the heart in me faileth.
 But, seeing the Gods know all, I pray thee that thou wouldst say
 Of which of the Gods I am fettered, and here am constrained to
 stay, [way.]

And may not pass over the fish-fraught sea on mine homeward
 Answered me then the soothfast Ancient, the hoary-wise :

'Nay, but to Zeus and the rest of the Gods must thou sacrifice
 Fair victims, and then go aboard, and so shalt thou run with the
 breeze 470

Swift to thy fatherland over the wine-dark wash of the seas.

For know that it is not thy weird to behold thy friends, and to come
 Back to the land of thy fathers, back to thine high-roofed home,
 Till again to the water of Egypt's river downfallen from heaven

Thou hast measured thy track, and the holy hecatomb-honour hast
given

To the deathless Gods that abide in the broad-arched heavens on
high. [doth sigh.]

So the Gods shall grant thee the home-track for which thy soul

So did he speak, but mine heart was riven asunder with pain

For that thus he commanded to cross the misty sea again

Afar unto Egypt-land, a weary and woeful way. 480

Yet in grief's despite I answered, and thus unto him did I say :

' I will do as thou biddest, Ancient, and bring to an end the task.

But give me an answer of truth to the thing that I furthermore ask.

Did all the Achæan war-kings win in the ships safe home

Whom Nestor and I left, passing from Troy-land over the foam ?

Or hath any by bitter destruction died in his galley afar,

Or passed in the arms of his friends, having woven the web of war ? '

So did I speak, but he straightway answered and cried unto me :

' Atreides, what hast thou to do to ask me ?—'twere better for thee

Not to know of the thing that I know ; and I tell thee thine heart
shall be stirred 490

With pain, and thy tears soon flow, when all my tale thou hast

For many the sword devoured, and left was many an one ; [heard.

But of all the Achæan brass-mailed chieftains two alone

Were lost in the home-way :—yea, by their side in the fight stood-
est thou ;—

And one in an isle ' mid the sea-plains wide is a prisoner now.

With his long-oared galleys was Ajax wrecked in the breaker-swirl ;

For against the Gyræan rocks did Poseidon the black ship hurl ;

But the God saved him from the sea, from the threshold of Hades'
gate ;

And now had he 'scaped destruction, for all Athené's hate, [500

But for his own presumption, the word that in madness he cried,

How that even in the Gods' despite he had 'scaped from the deep
sea-tide.

But Poseidon heard the vaunts that on high to the heavens he flung,

And straight in his mighty hands his three-forked mace he swung,

And he smote the Gyræan rock, and the crag in sunder he clave,

And the half abode in his place, and the half plunged down to the
wave,

Even that whereon Ajax had sat in his folly and frenzy of soul,

And it whelmed him down welter of surges and fathomless-deep
sea-roll. [draught from the sea.

So he died, when the vaunt-filled mouth had been filled with a

But thy brother—he 'scaped the fates ; for a little the doom shunned
he

In his hollow galleys, for him Queen Hère from bane did keep. 510

But when he drew nigh to Maleia's mountain-foreland steep,

Then a tempest caught him and drave him with staggering sails
aslant,

Heavily groaning, over the fishes' trackless haunt
To the uttermost verge of the land where Thyestes in days bygone
Dwelt, but the lord of it then was Aegisthus, Thyestes' son.

But even as they deemed that the home-faring scatheless from thence
should be, [sea.

The Gods turned backward the wind, and he won to his home by
O glad was he then to stand on his fatherland soil again ! [rain

And he kissed the ground as he touched it : the tears like summer
Fell from his eyes, for he looked on his land, and thereof was he
fain. 520

But afar from a height was he spied of the watchman whom that
false lord,

Aegisthus, had planted there, and had promised a goodly reward,
Two talents of gold ; and a whole year's space had he watched from
the height, [might ;

Lest he should come ere he knew with the storm of his battle-
So with tidings he hied to the hall of his lord, the shepherd of folk.

Then Aegisthus craftily dealt, and he plotted the treachery-stroke ;
For he chose to him twenty, his mightiest men, and his ambush he
laid,

And aloof at the hall's far side he bade that the feast be arrayed.

And with chariots and horses he hied him to meet Agamemnon the
king, [thing. 530

And he bade to the banquet, the while in his heart was a horrible
And homeward he brought him not knowing the death that was
doomed to befall, [stall ;

And he slew him amidst of the feast, as they slaughter an ox at the
Nor was any man left of the king Agamemnon's warrior train,
Neither one of the men of Aegisthus, but all in the hall lay slain."

Then with hearing the words that he said mine heart went nigh
to break ;

And I wept as I sat on the sands ; no more could my spirit take
Any pleasure in life, nor to look on the light of the sun was I fain ;
And I wept and I rolled to and fro in a passion of impotent pain,
Till my heart was weary of woe, and spake the Sea-ancient again :
' No longer, Atreus' son, weep ceaselessly, nay, but refrain, 540
Seeing nothing thereby shall be won ; and with speed lay to thine
hand,

To the end that thou mayest come to the soil of thy fatherland.

For perchance thou shalt find him alive, and perchance by Orestes
slain

Or ever thou come, and for thee but the burial-feast shall remain.'

So did he speak, and my heart and my lordly soul at the word
Again in my breast, for all mine anguish, kindled and stirred.

And I lift up my voice, and the light-winged words from my lips
forth came :

' These therefore I know : but now unto me the third man name,
Who is yet alive, and is prisoned amidst of the wide sea-plain, [550

Or, if he be dead, I would hear it, in spite of my anguished pain.'

So did I ask, and he answered me straightway, and spake furthermore :

'The son of Laertes, that dwelleth in halls upon Ithaca's shore,
Him have I seen in an island, and ever his hot tears flow
In the halls of Calypso the nymph, and she will not let him go ;
And he cannot escape from thence, nor return to his fatherland :
No galley with oars hath he, neither arms of a trusty band
To speed him away over long-ridging rollers of misty sea.

But, O thou fostered of Zeus, it is not fate-spoken for thee
In Argos the battle-steed-nurse to come to thy death-doom end :
But thee to the ends of the earth the Deathless Ones shall send,
To the plain Elysian, wherein bright-haired Rhadamanthus doth
dwell,

Where restful is life, and ever with men it goeth full well ;
Where the snow never drifts, where the tempest is not, nor the
rain's cold gleam, [stream

But the breath of the west-wind ever and aye from the Ocean-
With whispering soft and with cool sweet kisses for men doth
arise :— [eyes.'

Because thou hast Helen to wife, and art kinsman to Zeus in their

So having spoken, he plunged in the mountain-surgings flood.

But I went with my godlike mates unto where the galley stood ;
And with many a thought as I went did my heart full darkly brood.
But when I was come to my ship, as she lay by the hoar surf-line,
We dressed our supper, and over us came the night divine ; [570
And there we slept where the ripples crept to the murmuring shore,
Till, rosy-fingered, the sweet Dawn lingered mid mists no more.
Then first did we haul the galleys down to the vast sea-tide,
And we set up the masts in the shapely keels, and the sails shook
wide ;

And we entered up into the ship, and arow sat down to the stroke,
And the sea with the orderly dash of the blades into hoar foam
broke.

So back unto Egypt's river, the heaven-descended, I came
With my galleys, and rose unto heaven the holy hecatomb-flame.
So when I had honoured the Deathless, and past was the cloud of
their frown, 580

I piled Agamemnon a barrow, that his might be quenchless renown.
So, making an end, I returned, and the Deathless gave me a breeze,
And they wafted me back to my fatherland swiftly over the seas.

But come now, tarry awhile within these halls of mine, [shine ;
Till at least the eleventh day dawn, or the light of the twelfth day
And then shalt thou go in peace, and glorious gifts shalt receive,
Three steeds, and a well-polished car ; and besides all this will I give
A lovely chalice, and thence drink-offerings shalt thou pour
To the Deathless Ones, and so mayest think upon me evermore."

Then did Telemachus wise of wit make answer and say : 590

“Atreides, hinder me not, that I overlong should stay.
For by thee were I fain to sit through the round of the rolling year,
Nor once should a yearning come o’er me for home or for parents
dear,

So sorely I love thy words and the tale of thy telling to hear.
But already in Pylos the sandy my comrades chafe at my stay,
And here art thou keeping me yet with an overlong delay.
But as for the gift thou wouldst give, be it somewhat to keep for
thy sake ;

But thy bounty I leave with thee here, for the horses I cannot take
Unto Ithaca’s isle ; for the lealand wide that thou rulest over [600
Is a plain, where galingale groweth, and store of the ruddy clover,
And the wheat and the spelt and the bere broad-bearded and white
to see.

But in Ithaca horse-runs wide there are none, neither meadow-lea ;
Goat-pasture it is,—yet fairer than horse-grazing land unto me.
Yea, meadowless islands are not for horses ; their hill-slopes fall
Steeply adown to the sea, and in Ithaca most of all.”

So did he speak, and smiled Menelaus the warrior-lord ;
And he lovingly touched the child of Odysseus, and spake the word :
“Dear son, thy words give proof of the blood of no mean man.
Therefore the gift thou shalt take will I change, for this I can.
And, of all the royal treasures within my palace that shine, 610
The costliest thing and the fairest to see, even that shall be thine.
I will give thee a bowl fair-carven, of silver its precious mould,
Save only the rim thereof, and it gleams with the flame of gold.
’Tis the work of Hephæstus : the hero Phædimus gave it to me,
The Sidonians’ king, when I stood ’neath the roof of his hall by the
sea,

When the home-track brought me thither ; and this is the gift thou
shalt take.”

So they communing together each unto other spake.
Now came the banqueting throng to the halls of the godlike king :
And men drove fatlings along, and the glorious wine did they bring ;
And wives with headveils fair sent thither for them the bread : 620
So in the wide hall there was the goodly banquet spread.

But in front of the palace of king Odysseus the suitor-crew
Did the hunting-javelins fling for their sport, and the quoits they
threw,

In the level-beaten court where their insolence erst rang high ;
And Antinous watching the sport with Eurymachus sat thereby :
The chiefs of the suitors were they, and the others in might they
outshone.

And to them drew near that day Noëmon, Phronius’ son.
To Antinous thus did he speak, putting question concerning his
thought :

“Antinous, touching Telemachus, know we at all or not
How soon he is like to return from Pylos’ sandy shore :

He is thitherward gone with my galley, and now have I need there-
for,

Even to pass overseas unto Elis's lealand plain.

Twelve mares have I there, and mules unbroken : of them am I fain
To drive away some from the herd, and to break them in to the
rein." [did fill :

But his words perplexed them sore, and amazement their hearts
They had thought not of Pylos' shore ; in the fields they deemed
him still

Counting the swine-droves o'er, or the sheep that fed on the hill.

Then did Antinous, son of Eupeithes, answer and say :

" Tell to me truly this—when went he, and who were they
That along with him went ? of the Ithacans chosen, or folk of his
own, 640

Hired servants or thralls ? Yea, sooth, even this deed might he
have done !

And answer me this thing too, to the end I may know it aright :
Did he take by force that galley from thee in thine own despite,
Or didst thou willingly grant it, for prayer that he made unto thee ?"

But Noëmon Phronius' son made answer wonderingly :

" Surely I willingly gave it ;—what else had another man done ?

When a man so princely, yea, such a trouble-burdened one,
Maketh request, it were hard to refuse the boon, good sooth.

And men, even they that are counted the pride of the Ithacan youth,
Went as the crew of his ship : and the master thereof, as I deem,
Was Mentor, or else a God, for indeed he was like unto him. [650
But at this I marvel, that Mentor I here saw yesterday
At the daybreak,—yet unto Pylos then did he sail away!"

He spake, and he turned him again to go to the house of his
father ;

But over the souls of the twain did a cloud of amazement gather.
And they cried to the rest round about them to sit, their contests
done :

And to them did Antinous shout, Eupeithes' insolent son :

And he cried in his anguish sore, and a torrent of fury and shame
O'er his passion-dark soul did pour, and his eyes were as gleaming
flame ;

" Lo, how Telemachus now hath defiantly done the deed ! 660
See, now is his journey accomplished !—we deemed that he never
should speed.

Very boy that he is, he is gone, as he said, in despite of us all !

He hath launched him a ship, he hath chosen of the folk good
fellows and tall.

From this time forth will he work us mischief—May Zeus destroy
And blast his might in the bud, or ever he breed us annoy !

But come now, give me a galley swift, and twenty men,

And so will I wait in ambush, and watch for his coming again

In the strait t'wixt Ithaca's isle and Samos' rugged coast :

So to his grief shall he sail the seas for his father lost."

And they shouted that so should he do, and they all were of one consent.

670

Then straightway the suitor-crew to the hall of Odysseus went.

Howbeit it was not long ere Penelopë also was ware

Of the words of the suitor-throng and the darkly-plotted snare,
Seeing Medon the herald had heard, as he stood in the court the while;
And he bare to the queen the word how they wove the web of their guile;

For he hied with the tidings fast through Penelopë's palace-hall;
But, as over the threshold he passed, did the queen indignantly call:
"Herald, with what behest art thou come from the suitor-band?"

To give to the maids of Odysseus the godlike their command
To forsake their labours, and yonder for them the banquet to lay?
I would that of all their wooing this were the latest day,

[680

That this were the end of your banquets, your uttermost revelling-
Ye that assemble together and all our substance devour,

[hour,

The wise Telemachus' store, as though ye never had heard,
In the days overpast of your childhood, your fathers' praising word,
How good Odysseus was in the days when he ruled the land,
How none of your sires had mock of his mouth or harm of his hand.
Not so is the wont of the kings of the earth in their godlike state;
For they show unto one their favour, another must taste their hate.
But who of my lord had tyrannous handling?—None, there was none!

690

But herein is your malice made bare, and your shameful deeds are shown:

Thankless ye are for the favours forgotten, the good deeds done."

Then Medon the prudent-counselled spake to her answering:

"Ah Queen, and would that this of thine ills were the direst thing!
But a greater wrong by far, and a sorer evil than all

Is this that the suitors are plotting,—Zeus grant it may never befall!
For now is their purpose set that thy son with the sword be slain
As he homeward returneth: for news of his sire hath he crossed the main

Unto Pylos, the sacred strand, unto Sparta, the hallowed plain."

But she reeleth with knees stricken weak, in her heart no spirit is found,

700

And her lips no word may speak, and the tide of her anguish hath drowned

Her eyes, and her agony's weight hath fettered that rich voice fast.
Yet hardly reviving and late, full feebly she spake at the last:

"Herald, and why hath my son departed?—no need had he
To mount on the fleet-faring galleys, the chariot-steeds of the sea:
—And they pass, O far away, o'er the hungry weltering tide!—
Hath he done it, that not so much as his name among men may abide?"

[her:

And Medon the prudent-counselled made answer thereafter to

"I know not whether a God came hither his spirit to stir,
Or whether his own soul moved him to Pylos to go, to enquire 710
Of the home-coming feet or the fate that perchance hath befallen his
sire."

So when he had ended the word he returned to Odysseus' hall ;
But heart-breaking anguish was poured over her, nor endured she
at all

To sit upon any couch of all in the palace that were ;
Nay, low on the floor did she crouch of the chamber fashioned fair.
And she piteously wailed, and around her the moan of her hand-
maids rung, [young.

Of all in the house that were found, of the old, and withal of the
And with anguished heart-stricken cry she mourned to her maids
thereby :

"Hearken, my friends, for Zeus hath dealt very bitterly [720
With me, above all that were born and nurtured along with me.
Erewhile my gallant husband, the lion-hearted, I lost,
In all that a man may do unmatched in the Danaan host ;
And the voice of his fame through the length and breadth of Hellas
is gone.

And now have the tempests snatched away my beloved son :
And none knoweth what hath befallen : I heard not concerning his
going.

—Cruel ones ! none of you cared, albeit of this well knowing,
None of you cared to come and awaken me out of my sleep,
When my son was departing away in the black ship over the deep.
For if I had heard that he purposed such journey as this in his
heart,

Verily should he have tarried, how eager soe'er to depart ; 730
Else had he left his mother dead in his palace-hall.

But let some one away with speed, and the old man Dolius call,—
My servant ; when hither I came did my father give him to me,
Of mine orchard now is he keeper, the garden of many a tree,—
That with haste he may go to Laertes, and all these things may say,
If so it may hap that he in his heart shall devise some way, [slay
And shall go and make moan to the people, the folk that purpose to
My son, his seed, and the seed of Odysseus the godlike lord."

Then Eurycleia the ancient nurse took up the word :

"Dear lady, for this shalt thou slay thy thrall with the pitiless
sword, 740

Or bid me live on, but the word from thee will I nowise hide :
All this did I know, and whatever he bade me, did I provide,
Sweet wine, and bread ; and he caused me to swear no word to say
Of this unto thee, till the twelfth day came from his going away,
Or thou fell'st in a longing for him, and didst hear he was gone and
afar, [mar.

That thou shouldst not with tears unavailing thy radiant loveliness
But bathe thyself now, and in raiment clean thy body array,

And pass to thine upper chamber along with thine handmaids, and
 pray [bear ;

To Athenê the Daughter of Zeus who the shield of the Aegis doth
 For she can deliver him, yea, from the jaws of death can she tear.
 But an old man sore vexed vex not further, for surely I deem [750
 That the seed of Arkeisius' son not utterly hateful doth seem
 In the eyes of the Gods, but still of his line shall a man be found
 To be lord of his high-roofed halls and the fair lands lying around."

Then from wailing refrained the queen, and the tears from her
 eyelids were stayed ;

And she bathed herself, and in clean fair raiment her body arrayed.
 And up to her chamber she passed with her handmaiden-train at
 her side : [cried :

From the basket the barley she cast, and in prayer to Athenê she
 " Hear me, thou Child of the Aegis-bearer, Unwearied One !

If e'er in his halls many-counselled Odysseus hath sacrifice done
 With the fat of oxen or sheep aflame on thine altar-fire, [760
 I beseech thee, remember it now, and save his beloved son,

And confound the suitors, and baffle their arrogant hearts' desire."

Then the sacrifice-cry she cried, and the Goddess hearkened her
 call. [shadowy hall ;

But the suitors with tumult and brawl were loud through the
 And thus, in their insolent pride, spake one to another there :

" Doubtless this queen of many a wooer e'en now doth prepare
 Her bridal ; nor knoweth how waits for her son the murder-snare."

So with infatuate breast they laughed, and the truth none knew :
 But Antinous spake to the rest of the lawless suitor-crew : 770

" Ye fools, refrain you all alike from arrogant speech,
 Lest the thing we devise to the ears of those within should reach.

But come, let us all full silently rise, our purpose to speed,
 That the word that hath pleased us all may quickly become the
 deed." [hold's foes ;

Then the mightiest twenty he chose from the throng of the house-
 And they hasted, and soon as the crew to the sea and the galley
 were come,

Down to the deep they drew, and they launched her forth on the
 foam. [them along ;

And the sail and the tapering mast they brought, and they laid
 And they lashed the long oars fast, each one with its leathern
 thong,—

All things in order due,—and they spread the white sail wide ; 780
 And their weapons were brought for them then by their insolent
 serving-men.

And off the land in the blue sea moored they the galley to ride :
 Then supped on the shore the crew, and waited the eventide.

But Penelopê passing-wise is still in the women's bower ;
 And fasting there she lies through many a wretched hour,
 Ever moaning her heart within, " Shall my darling escape them yet,

Or be taken in that death-gin which the arrogant suitors have set ? ”
 As a baffled lion doth brood, as he quails in the midst of his foes,
 When the tinchel draws in through the wood, when the hunters
 around him close, [eyes swim, 790
 So wild are the thoughts that leap through her brain, till the tired
 And the pale face droops in sleep, and smoothed is each cramped
 limb.

But Athenê of flashing eyes hath another thing yet to do ;
 For a phantom she caused to arise, and lo, as a woman it grew,
 And Iphthimê's form it bore, Icarius' queenly daughter,
 Whom Eumêlus wedded of yore, and afar unto Pheræ brought her.
 And she sped the phantom's flight to Odysseus' hall that night,
 To make Penelopê cease from the mourning born of her fears,
 And to give to the sad heart peace, and to dry up the fountain of
 tears.

And into the chamber it sped,—by the thong of the bolt did it slip,—
 And it leaned o'er Penelopê's head, and it murmured with shadowy
 lip : 800

“ Penelopê, sleepest thou, with a nightmare-pain in thy breast ?
 —Nay, this shall the Gods forbid that abide in sorrowless rest,
 That wailing and woe should be thine, for thy son shall return unto
 For in sooth in the sight of the Gods no evil-doer is he.” [thee ;

Saith Penelopê passing-wise to the shade that her sister seems,
 As she restfully, sweetly lies in the gates of the hall of dreams :

“ Sister, why art thou here, who hast not been wont to come
 Heretofore unto me, for thou dwell'st in a far-away distant home ?
 And thou biddest me cease from my woe, biddest all the anguish
 depart, [heart. 810

The cloud that o'ershadows my soul, the weight that oppresses my
 Erewhile mine hero-husband, the lion-hearted, I lost,
 In all that a man may do unmatched in the Danaan host,
 And the voice of his fame through the length and the breadth of
 Hellas is gone.

And departed now in the hollow ship is my darling son,
 Untried in toils and in strife of tongues when the folknotes gather.
 Yea, and I mourn even more for him than his hero-father ;
 And sorely I tremble and fear lest unto him mischief betide
 Midst the folk whereunto he is gone, or out on the sea-plains wide.
 For foes full many are plotting against his life, and burn
 To slay him, or ever again to the land of his sires he return.” 820

Answering then unto her the shadowy phantom replied :

“ Take heart, let not thy bosom of courage be utterly void ; [a guide
 For now hath there gone with thy son such a guard for the way, such
 As men full oft have besought to stand in her might at their side,
 Even Pallas Athenê : thy mourning the Goddess's ruth hath stirred,
 And now hath she sent me hither to speak unto thee this word.”

Made answer the wise-heart queen, as thrilled her slumbering
 breast :

“ If a Goddess thou art indeed, and hast hearkened a God’s behest,
Tell me, O tell me also of that ill-fated one !

Is he anywhere yet alive and beholding the light of the sun ? 830
Or is he in Hades’ halls ?—ah me, can it be he hath died ? ”

Answering then unto her the shadowy phantom replied :

“ Nay, but I may not tell thee all that remaineth behind,
Whether he live or be dead,—but the idle word is as wind.”

And the phantom was no more there : by the bolt of the door had
it darted, [started ;

Passing into the breath of the air. But out of her slumber she
And her heart was aglow and agleam, and its darkness was turned
into light

For the vivid blessed dream that had come in the hush of the night.

But the suitors had gone aboard, and out to sea they stood,
Panting to redden the sword with the son of Odysseus’ blood.

Now a rocky islet lies in the mid-strait’s sea-surge hoar,— 840

To the west doth Samos arise, to the east is Ithaca’s shore,—
Asteris, nowise great, and havens therein there be twain.

There lurk the Achæans, and wait till the prey returneth again.

BOOK V.

Of the lone isle of Calypso, and how Odysseus sailed
thence, and was shipwrecked.

UP rose Dawn from her bed by proud Tithonus' side, [wide.
On Immortals her light to shed, and on men on the earth-plain
Then did the high Gods gather, and midst them in awful state
Sat Zeus, loud-thundering Father, whose might is resistlessly great.
And Pallas Athenê rose, for her spirit was kindled to tell
The hero Odysseus' woes, with a Goddess constrained to dwell :
“ Zeus our Father, and ye the blessed Gods ever-living,
Why should a king any more be merciful, fault-forgiving,
Gracious, and swaying a sceptre in righteousness ? Why not rather
Stern, and an evil oppressor ?—for he that was kind as a father 10
And good to his folk, as though they were sons of his loins begotten,
Hath none to remember Odysseus now,—he is clean forgotten.
He lieth afar in an island, forlorn in his anguish and woe,
In the halls of Calypso the Nymph, and she will not let him go.
And he cannot escape from thence, nor return to his fatherland :
No galley with oars hath he, nor arms of a trusty band,
To speed him across the sea, on the long-riding swell thereof.
And lo, they are seeking to take the life of the son of his love,
What time he comes home, who for news of his father sailed over
the main
Unto Pylos, the sacred strand, unto Sparta, the hallowed plain.” 20
Answered her Zeus, of whose hands the clouds together are
swept :
“ Daughter, what saying is this, through the fence of thy teeth that
hath leapt ?
For is it not all thy devising, how back to his palace-hall
Odysseus shall come, and requital on those ill-doers shall fall ?
Then speed thou Telemachus back in thy wisdom,—for thou know-
est best,—
That again he may come to the land of his fathers, and none may
molest,

And the suitors return as they came in their ship from a bootless quest.” [with heed :

And he spake unto Hermes his son, and the Guide-god hearkened
“Hermes,—for thou art our messenger ever in all our need,—
Speed to the fair-tressed Nymph, and our sure decree declare 30
That Odysseus the steadfast-hearted back to his home may fare,
Whom neither the Gods shall carry, nor galley of men shall bear.
But he on a raft strong-bound shall pass over a wearisome way,
Till he come unto Scheria’s fat-loamed land on the twentieth day,
Where dwell the Phæacian folk, that are nigh to the Gods in line ;
And these shall render him honour, as though he were even divine :
And they in a galley shall send him home to his own dear land,
With their gifts of brass and of gold, and raiment enow in his hand,
More than Odysseus from Troy-land ever had carried away, [40
Scatheless had he come thence with his own full share of the prey.
For thus is it fated that he shall behold his friends, and shall come
Back to the land of his fathers, back to his high-roofed home.”

So did he speak, and the Guide that slew Argus did nowise refuse :
But swift to his feet he tied his beautiful sandal-shoes,
Ambrosial, golden-gleaning, that bore him over the main,
Swift as the winds far-streaming, and o’er earth’s limitless plain.
And the Wand of the Spells hath he ta’en, that charms into
slumber deep

Whomsoever he will, and again it breaketh the bands of sleep.
Bearing his wand of might the Slayer of Argus stooped [swooped,
From the sky to Pieria’s height, then down on the ocean he
And over the sea-swell darted, as onward a sea-mew slips [dips
Where the dread wave-bosoms are parted, and down the hollows it
Fishing, with wings agileam with the dew of the salt sea-spray :
So did the Guide-god seem, skimming wave after wave on his way.
But when to the isle came he, the far-away lonely strand,
From the face of the violet sea the God set foot on the land.
And he went till he came to a grot, a great wide cavern, and there
Found he the Goddess he sought, the Nymph of the beautiful hair.
On the hearth a great fire shone : through the island was wafted
from thence

The scent of the fuel thereon, of the cedar and frankincense. 60
And, with sound of a sweet voice ringing, gold shuttle and shining
thread

Ever the Nymph plied, singing in time to her fairy tread.
And around the grotto a wood shot up in abundant bloom,
Where alder and poplar stood, and the cypress of goodly perfume.
Fearlessly long-winged fowl there roosted the branches among,
The falcon, the round-eyed owl, and the crows with chattering tongue
That hunt for their prey where the bright sea-spray is around them
flung.

And, all the grotto surrounding, the arms of a vine went straying,
With green leaf-masses abounding, and clusters heavily weighing.

And the sunlit water was gushing from four sweet springs out-
flowing 70

Anigh at the first, till rushing the ripples ran, all ways going.
And meadows with parsley green, and with purple of violets dight,
Glowed with an emerald sheen. Were a God to chance on the sight,
There would he linger, I ween, with his whole soul drinking delight.
And there did he stand at gaze, and the Slayer of Argus wondered,
And his spirit was filled with amaze, as all the marvel he pondered.
And nigh to the cavern he drew ; and even as Hermes came,
The Goddess Calypso knew the Guide-god's visage and name.
For they that immortal are ne'er come to each other unknown,
Though one be dwelling afar from the rest, in a palace alone. 80
But Odysseus the noble of heart might not in the grotto be seen,
But he wept by the shore apart, as his wont had aforetime been,
Rending his heart with sighs and with tears and with yearning
pain,

Wistfully gazing with eyes tear-dimmed on the barren main.

To a glorious glittering throne Calypso hath Hermes led, [said :
And, bidding the God make known the cause of his coming, she
" Why hast thou come, O Hermes with wand of gold, to my shore,
O honoured and dear ? 'Tis a way that thou seldom hast trodden
before.

Utter thy purpose : my heart bids me do whatsoe'er may be done.
But first draw nigh to my board, and the guest-fare spread there-
upon." 90

Then, that the God might eat, the Goddess a table spread
With ambrosia, heavenly meat, and with nectar rosy-red.
And Hermes took of her fare, and he quaffed of the nectar-bowl,
Even till the Argus-slayer with cheer had filled his soul.
Then in reply to the Nymph with the words of his mouth he spake :
" Thou hast asked of my coming : an answer of truth unto thee
will I make.

As a God's reply to a Goddess, sooth shall mine answer be.
Zeus hath commanded me, loth as I was, to come hither to thee,—
For who of himself across such limitless ocean-swell
Would speed to a land that hath no cities wherein men dwell, 100
Where never an altar smoked, where never a victim fell ?
But when he that beareth the Aegis commands, among all the rest
May none make void his word, transgressing his high behest :—
He saith, thou hast by thee the man whose lot hath been harder
than all

Of the heroes who battled for nine long years round Ilium's wall,
Until in the tenth in ashes the city of Priam lay :
But against Athenè they sinned amidst of their homeward way,
So she smote them by armies of winds and the long sea-rollers' array :
There did the rest of his men sink down into deep sea-graves,
But he was hitherward swept by the stress of the winds and the
waves. 110

Him must thou speedily suffer homeward again to hie ;
For it is not his doom that here afar from his friends he should die,
But 'tis fated that he shall again behold his friends, and come
Back to the land of his fathers, back to his high-roofed home."

Shuddered the Goddess with pain when the heavy behest she
knew, [flew :
And she spake unto Hermes again, and her winged words answering
" Hard-hearted and jealous Gods ! none other are like you," she cried,
" Who ever begrudge that a Goddess should couch by a mortal's
side,

Though she would openly wed him, for love subduing her pride !
It was so when the rosy-fingered Eos Orion chose ; 120
Still were ye jealous of him, ye Gods in your careless repose,
Until Artemis undefiled from her golden throne had sped,
And slain by her painless shafts he lay in Ortygia dead.
It was so when Demeter bent to the rush of the storm of her passion,
And she and Iasion flushed with delight in the old sweet fashion
In the thrice-eared field. Not long ! That eye was scowling above
her ;

And the fierce white flame of the lightning came, and dead was
her lover. [side,
It is so now again ! Ye begrudge that a mortal should stay at my
Whom I saved when the sea washed him hither, forlorn, on a keel
astride,

Alone ; for Zeus with his gleaming bolt had riven asunder 130
His ship on the wine-dark sea, and the waters had whelmed it under.
There did the rest of his men sink down into deep sea-graves ;
But he was hitherward swept by the stress of the winds and the
waves.

I have given him life and my love : I have promised to give unto him
An immortal being, and days that old age never shall dim.
But since he that beareth the Aegis commands, and of all the rest
May none make void his word, transgressing his high behest,
Let him go—if 'tis Zeus that requireth me out of my heart to rend
him—

Over the harvestless sea ; but it is not I that will send him.
No galley with oars have I, no arms of a trusty crew 140
To speed him across the long-ridged swell of the waters blue :
Yet with all my heart will I give to him counsel, and will not hide
How he may pass to his country unharmed, whatsoever betide."

The Guide-god, Slayer of Argus, answered her then, and said :
" Even so, as thou say'st, do thou send him : beware of the God,
and dread

Ever to kindle his fierceness of anger against thine head."

Thus when the God had replied, on the wings of the wind he de-
parted.

And straightway the Goddess hied to Odysseus the mighty-hearted,
Because of the strait command of the Thunderer, King of the skies ;

And the hero she found on the strand sitting lonely, and never his
 eyes 150
 Were dry of the tears that streamed : his life's tide ebb'd in their
 flowing :

Of lost home ever he dreamed, and hateful the Nymph was growing
 And still, in his heart's despite, at eve to the grotto he crept,
 And side by side through the night the loving and loveless slept.
 But rending his heart with sighs and with tears and with yearning
 pain,

And wistfully gazing with eyes tear-dimmed on the harvestless main,
 Alone on the shores of the sea or the cliffs he sat through the day.
 But now to his side came she, and the Goddess began her say :

"Mourn no longer, O evil-starred, consuming thy heart :
 Full fain will I let thee go, and behold, thou shalt straightway
 depart. 160

Come then, and hew long planks with the axe, and fashion for thee
 A broad-beamed raft, and high thereupon shall the deck-planks be,
 Safely to bear thee home on the face of the misty sea.

And fear not thou to famish thereon, for the task shall be mine
 To store it with bread and with water and rosily-blushing wine.
 I will clothe thee with raiment, and send a fair breeze following fast ;
 And so unharmed shalt thou come to the land of thy fathers at last,
 If it please the Gods that dwell in the broad-arched heaven, for still
 Stronger are they than I to devise and to work their will."

So spake she, and shivered with dread Odysseus with woes long-
 tried ; 170
 And the winged words answering sped, and the man to the Goddess
 replied :

"Nay, it is something else than a journey thou plottest for me,
 Who biddest me cross on a raft the mighty abyss of the sea,
 Terrible, troublous : not unto stately ships is it given,
 Swift-speeding, to pass it at will, borne blithe by the breezes of
 heaven.

Never a raft this body against thy pleasure shall bear,
 Unless thou be willing, O Goddess, an oath of might to swear
 That thou wilt not contrive nor imagine new mischief against me
 there." [caressed him,

So spake he ; the Goddess the while with her white hand softly
 And her lips broke into a smile as lightly she spake and addressed
 "O but a knave keen-witted thou art, all hazards among,— [him :
 To think such a thought in thine heart, and to speak such a word with
 thy tongue !

Now therefore let Earth be witness of this, and heaven high-soaring,
 And the sunless Styx that down to the underworld goes pouring,—
 Mightiest oath for the Gods ever-blessèd, an oath of fear,—
 That I do not contrive nor imagine new mischief against thee here.
 But the thought of mine heart, the intent of my mind, is even the
 As I for myself would devise if upon me a like need came. [same

For not, ah not as thou thinkest, is loyal Calypso's mind, [190
Nor of steel is the heart in this bosom of mine, but pity-inclined."

So when her words were ended, back with a hurried tread
She passed, and the hero attended, following whither she led.
So they came to the vaulted stone where the ribs of the mountain
were cleft;

And the man sat down on the throne that Hermes so lately had left.
And the Nymph for the hero spread sweet wine and manifold meat,
But all was of earth, as the bread that mortals are wont to eat.

And she sat down face to face with Odysseus the godlike wight;
And by her did her handmaids place ambrosia and nectar bright.
And they their hands extended, of food and of drink to partake;
But as soon as the meal was ended, Calypso the Goddess spake:
"O Zeus' seed, son of Laertes, Odysseus of many an art, [200
Is it so, that home to thine own dear land thou art fain to depart?
Art thou longing to leave me forthright?—is it so?—ay, go in
peace.

But O if thou knewest what troubles, or ever thy wanderings cease,
Thou art doomed to fill up full-brimmed, on the way to thy native
shore, [evermore;

Here wouldst thou tarry with me, thou wouldst dwell in this home
Immortality then should be thine, for all thy yearning to gaze
On that wife of thine, for whom thou art pining through all thy days.
Surely that beauty of hers is not so peerlessly fair

That in grace and in stately height Calypso may not compare; 210
For if women outshone the Immortals, strange of a truth it were."

Unto her did Odysseus the subtle of wit make ready reply:
"Ah, be not angry with me for this, great Goddess, for I
Know all full well: were prudent Penelopë matched with thee,
Dim were her beauty by thine, and but frail were her form to see;
For a mortal she is, but from death and from eld evermore thou art
free.

But, in spite of all, do I long, and through all my days I yearn
To win to my home once more, and to look on my day of return.
But if on the wine-dark sea any God shall wreck me again,
I will bear it, who have in my bosom a spirit inured to pain: 220
For many a grief and many a toil have I borne before
Mid the surge of the sea and the battle,—and this shall be but one
more."

As he ended, sank in the wave the sun and arose the night;
And they passed through the vaulted cave to a nook secluded from
sight;

And the night sped fast as the soft hours passed amid love's delight.

When the Child of the Mist awoke, when the Rosy-fingered
shone,

Arrayed in his mantle and cloak from the cave is the hero gone.

In a silvery-shining vest full-flowing, of delicate thread,
The Goddess her body dressed, and her dainty girdlestead

A golden girdle pressed, and a veil streamed down from her head.
And now 'twas Calypso's will to send the hero away. [230

She gave him a broad brown bill, full meet for his hand to sway,
Brazen, with keen heads twain, and a helve well fitted thereto,
Of the olive with tawny grain, that a craftsman with pride would
view.

And an adze well-polished she gave, and she led to the isle's far side,
Where, hard by the deep sea-wave, the tall trees stood in their
pride ;

The alder, the poplar, and, high uplifting its crown, the pine,
Long time sapless and dry,—they would lightly ride over the brine.
And when she had shown him the spot where the tall trees swayed
in the blast,

Back to her lonely grot Calypso the Goddess passed. 240

But he fell to his toil by the shore, and swiftly the work sped on,
Until he had felled a score in all, and he lopped each one ;
And the trunks did he smooth and trim by adze and measuring-line.
And augers were brought unto him by Calypso the Goddess divine ;
And he bored the timbers through, and each unto other did fit them,
And with clamps together he drew, and the pegs he hammered to
knit them.

And even as wide as a man in the shipwright's mystery skilled
A broad-beamed hull will plan, when a freight-ship he meaneth to
build,

So was the width of the raft that he fashioned for steady sailing ;
And he put up the decks of the craft, to the close-thronged ribs fast
nailing ; 250

And he finished the hull at last with the long strakes running
around ;

And he set up therein the mast, and the yard athwart it he bound :
And he fashioned a helm, to turn the craft's head whither he listed ;
And he fenced her from stem to stern with hurdles of osier twisted,
For a shield from the dash of the brine ; and the ballast he piled
below :

And Calypso the Goddess divine brought mantles of ample flow
To make into sails for his craft, and cunningly these wrought he :
And at last, when halliards and braces and sheets were lashed in
their places,

With levers he forced the raft down into the mighty sea.

So the work sped day after day, till the fourth brought all to an
end ; 260

On the fifth the Goddess away from the island the hero would send.
And after the bath she arrayed him in garments of perfume divine ;
And skins on the raft she laid ; the one was of dark-flushed wine,
And the other an ample skin of water, and victual enow
In a wallet, for meats within it abundant and good did she stow.
And she sent him a kindly wind that blew softly over the seas,
And the hero with gladsome mind spread forth his sail to the breeze.

And he steered her deftly and well, for he handled the tiller with skill ;

And treacherous sleep ne'er fell on the eyes that were watchful still,
For he kept the Pleiads in front, and the Herdman, who slowly doth gain [Wain :

His rest, and the Bear,—they are wont to call it moreover the
Ever turning at bay, doth it glare on Orion's falchion-gleam,
And alone it hath no share in the baths of the Ocean-stream :—
For Calypso the Goddess divine had bidden him still to keep
Over his left that sign as he fared on the face of the deep.

So seven days and ten o'er the waste of the waters he steered :

On the eighteenth day to his ken far shadowy hills appeared :

Phæacian land were they, where the coast lay nearest to him :

Like a shield outspread they lay in the offing mistily dim.

But now the Earth-shaker espied him, on Solymê's hills as he turned, 280

When from Aethiop land he hied him : the hero afar he discerned,
As he sailed on the face of the sea, and his wrath flamed out like fire ;

And unto his soul spake he, and he shook his head for ire ;

" Ha ! is it so, that, when I was afar in the Aethiop land,

Changing decrees they have mocked me when I was not there to withstand ?

Yea, and Odysseus is close by this to Phæacia's shore : [more,—

There is his weird that he win to his goal, and be harassed no
Nay, but he yet shall be drunk with my wrath ere his troubles be o'er." [was troubled

Then he gathered the clouds, and the face of the darkening sea
By the dash of his three-forked mace, and the wrath of the winds he redoubled, 290

As he swept them from every quarter, and masses of cloud on-driven
Overshrouded the land and the water, and night rushed down from the heaven. [bitter and fell,

And the East-wind and South rushed forth, and the West-wind
And the blast from the skies of the north came rolling a vast sea-swell.

Then, with knees unstrung by his fear, as his failing heart 'gan quake,
Odysseus, heavy of cheer, to his mighty spirit spake :

" Ah me ! wretched am I ! what is this that at last shall befall ?

So ran the Goddess's words,—true, sorely I fear, were they all :

For she told me of perils of waters that, ere I should win to mine home,

I should pass through, and woes in full measure,—and lo, the fulfilment is come ! 300

With cloud upon cloud hath Zeus the broad-arched heaven overcast,
And the sea hath he lashed into fury, and racing comes blast after blast, [fast.

For the winds are all up, and destruction o'ertaketh me surely and

Thrice happy, and four times, the Danaans who long ago left their life

In broad Troyland, as they rallied round Atreus' sons in the strife!
Ah to have died myself, and a glorious fate to have won

In the day when, defying a host of the Trojans, I guarded alone—
While the hiss of their spears shrilled sharp in mine ears—dead
Peleus' son!

Then funeral rites had been mine, the Achæans had published my fame : [310

But now must I wretchedly perish with neither a tomb nor a name."

As he spake it, a toppling wave on the raft with a fierce bound sprung,

And it burst thereover, and drave it through welter of whirlpools swung. [lost

And afar from the deck is he tossed, and his hold on the rudder is
In the charge of the terrible host of the blasts that the whirlwinds
confound. [sail are cast

Snapt through the midst is the mast, and the yard and the main-
Streaming afar on the blast, till they splash in the surge and are
drowned. [still mocked

Long time was he whelmed down deep, for the monstrous waves
His toil mid the swing and the sweep of the sea as it weltered and
shocked :

And the raiment heavily bare that was given by the Nymph divine.
But at last he rose to the air, and he spat the bitter brine 320
From his mouth, with his eyes nigh blind with the water that
streamed from his hair :

Yet still did he bear in mind his raft, amid pain and despair ;

And through dash of the surge and the spray he struck out, and he
grasped thereat ; [as he sat,

And from death's clutch shrinking away he crouched, in the midst
While the waves in their terrible play were tossing it this way and
that. [thither

And as thistle-down heads in the fall o'er the bare fields hither and
Are tossed by the gusty squall as in clusters they cling together,
So the wild winds caught it and drave it by maddening hollow and
crest ; [to be whirled,

And now 'twas the South-wind that hurled it away by the North
And now 'twas the East that gave it a prey to the passionate West.

But Ino Leucotheë the distress of the hero hath seen,— [330
The daughter of Cadmus she, who of old had a mortal been ;
But now mid the sea had she part in the worship of Gods ever-
blest ;— [distrest.

And she marked him with pitiful heart in bewilderment roaming
Swift as a sea-mew's flight from abysses unfathomed she sprang ;
On the raft did she softly alight, and her voice through the mad din
rang :

"Woe-worn, why is the wrath of the Shaker of Earth upon thee

So terribly stern, that his hand this manifold evil hath done thee ?
Nay, but he shall not destroy thee, though never so furious he be.
Come then, do as I bid thee,—for wisdom, I ween, is with thee,—
Put off thy garments, forsake thou thy raft to be driven by the blast ;
Swim, striking out with thine hands, till thy wanderings shall end
at the last

In the Phæacian land, where thy weird is to win to thy rest.
Lo, take this immortal veil, and bind it beneath thy breast.
So shalt thou get no hurt, fear not, and thou shalt not be drowned.
But as soon as by toil of thine hands thou hast set thy feet on the
ground,

Unwind it again from thy body, and cast it afar from thee
Forth to the waves from the land, and look not behind thee to see."

So spake the Goddess, and gave the veil from her tresses bright ;
And into the tossing wave she flashed in a moment from sight 350
Swift as the white sea-mew, and the black swell over her rolled.
But he, in a strait betwixt two, was bethinking him how he
should do ;

And heavy of cheer he spake of his fear to his heart high-souled :
" Ah me ! what if one of the Gods should be weaving again for me
A web of deceit, in bidding me leap from the raft to the sea !—

Nay, but I will not obey, since far away to mine eyes [ance lies.
Seemed the land that I saw erewhile, where she saith my deliver-
Nay, but in any wise this will I do, for best it seems :

So long as the raft part not, firm-knit by the joints of the beams,
Still amid pain will I arm me with patience, and here will abide.
But as soon as the surge shall have shattered my raft with planks
flung wide, [360

I will swim as I may, since I see naught else that may better betide."

Even as Odysseus pondered with thoughts in confusion whirled,
Suddenly rushing there thundered a wave by the Earth-shaker
hurled ; [bore,

And it towered ever higher o'erarching, and dire was the crest that it
And it bowed, and it crashed, and a cataract dashed on his head
with a roar.

As a wind on a chaff-heap sweeping tosses and flings it abroad,
And the awns through the wild air leaping hither and thither are
strawed, [striding

So the planks of the raft wide-flung were scattered ; but he, be-
One of the long beams, clung, as a man on a wild horse riding. 370
And he stripped from his body the vest that the Goddess Calypso
gave,

And he wound beneath his breast the veil of the Nymph of the wave.
And he dived overhead in the sea, and he spread out his hands as
to swim,

Striking out with a manful stroke ; and the Earth-shaker looked
upon him,

And shaking his head he spoke, and his laugh was bitter and grim :

“ Thus now encompassed with trouble go wander afar on the main,
Till a respite from woes in the land of the favoured of heaven thou
gain :

Even so thou wilt not think lightly, I ween, of thy measure of pain.”

He spake, and he turned him, and lashed his coursers with mane
fair-flowing,

And away unto Aegæ he dashed, to his glorious temple going. 380

But not so was the mind of the daughter of Zeus in her hero's
need : [ous speed ;

For she barred the winds' ways on the water, she bridled their furi-

And she sent her commandment forth, and she hushed them and

lulled them to sleep ; [of the deep,

And she called up a wind from the north, and it levelled the waves

Till Odysseus, from fate's net free, and unscathéd of black death's
stroke,

Amidst the Phæacians should be, the guest of the oar-loving folk.

Two nights did he drift on the main, two days of horror and fear,

And his heart again and again beheld death hovering near.

But when, with the third, o'er the east the tresses of morning flushed,

The wind's feet utterly ceased from their race, and its breathing was
hushed ; 390

And, looking out keenly before him, Odysseus beheld the land,

As a mountain wave upbore him, and, lo, it was nigh at hand.

O sweet as the first faint ray of a father's returning life

To his children, when day after day he hath wrestled in mortal strife

With the last grim foe, and in pain hath he long been constrained to
languish— [anguish—

But the Gods have given him again a sweet, sweet respite from

So to Odysseus sweet seemed the land and the wood-crowned
height, [might.

And to tread thereupon with his feet he swam with his uttermost

But when so near drew he that a shout could be heard from the
shore, 400

He heard the boom of the sea as it burst on the reefs with a roar ;

For the vast sea-swell came tumbling down with a thunder-shock,

And it crashed with a hollow rumbling, with spray-rain veiling the
rock.

No haven for ships was near, no road from the breakers sheltered,

But great cliffs towering sheer, and reefs where the mad surge
weltered.

And his knees were loosened for fear, and his very heart 'gan quake,

As Odysseus, heavy of cheer, to his mighty spirit spake :

“ Ah me, though Zeus hath vouchsafed me the sight of the land at
Beyond all hope, and the deep is by terrible toil overpast, [last

Nowhere a landing-place from the hoary sea doth appear ;

For the sharp rocks stretch in a fringe outside, and ever I hear 410

The roar of the surge as it shocks them : the smooth rock runs up

And right to the base of the cliffs the water is fathoms deep. [sheer ;

Here is there no escape, no hold for my feet on the steep.
 What if a great wave snatch me essaying to land, and drive
 Full on a jagged rock?—all vain were it then to strive!
 But and if I shall still swim, coasting along, if I haply may reach
 A haven between low spits, with a slantwise-shelving beach,
 I fear lest a tempest again may snatch me away, and sweep
 Heavily groaning for anguish afar on the fish-fraught deep.
 Or perchance a God will send some ravening monster on me 420
 From the sea-caves,—they pasture by thousands amidst of the
 sounding sea,—

For I know that the Earth-shaker's wrath is upon me relentlessly."

Thus as the hero thought, while sorely his heart misgave him,
 A huge wave suddenly caught and full on the reef it drave him:
 Then had his skin been flayed, and his bones had been broken there,
 But Pallas Athenê made the heart in him strong to bear.
 Forward he darted, and clung to the rock with both hands fast,
 And gasping and groaning he hung till the rush of the billow was
 past.

And so that peril was o'er, but the back-sweep smote him again,
 And recoiling resistlessly bore him afar on the open main. 430
 And even as when from its cleft a poulp many-footed ye pluck,
 Many a pebble is left on the cups of its snake-arms stuck,
 So, as the wave-rush ripped his hands from their desperate hold,
 The skin from his palms was stripped, and the sea high over him
 rolled.

And there, before his hour, had Odysseus wretchedly perished,
 But Pallas Athenê's power gave wisdom to him that she cherished:
 He battled his way out free of the surf running shorewards high,
 And in line with the coast swam he, if he anywhere might espy
 Some low slant-shelving beach lying back in a sheltered cove.
 And at last it befell him to reach, through the wave as he wearily
 strove, 440

The mouth of a river fair, and he hailed his deliverance at last:
 No barrier of rock was there, but a covert above from the blast.
 And he spake to the God in prayer, as his broad stream swept out
 fast:—

"Hearken, O King, whatsoever thy name, for a suppliant to thee,
 With many a prayer, from the deep and the threats of Poseidon I
 Even the Gods immortal respect the suppliant cry [flee.
 Of a man that comes wandering to them: lo, such an one even am I.
 Out of manifold troubles I cry unto thee, at thy knees do I bow:
 Have compassion upon me, O King, and respect thy suppliant now."

Straightway the River-god stayed his flowing; the waves no more
 Tossed, but in calm were laid: and he brought him safe to shore
 At the stream's outfall. But spent was his strength by the fight
 with the sea, [helplessly;
 And his strong knees trembled and bent, and his arms drooped
 And his body was swoln all o'er, and the brine came gushing away—

From nostrils and mouth did it pour—and voiceless and breathless
he lay

Utterly void of strength, in weariness swooning for pain.

When his spirit came back at length, and he breathed a little again,

The veil that was round his breast he unwound : no power had he

To return as she bade to the giver her gift, but nervelessly

He dropt it into the river that murmured on to the sea. 460

Over ripple and swirl did it shine, till the sea-swell met it ; and then

A white hand flashed from the brine, and the Nymph hath her own

again. [bed,

Then he turned from the river away, and sank down on a soft rush-

And he kissed the ground as he lay ; but heavy of heart he said :

“ Ah me, what shall befall me ? to what shall I come at the last ?

If in the river-hollow the comfortless night shall be passed,

I fear me the bitter frost and the chill dawn-dew full soon

Shall make an end of the life that is gasping back from its swoon :

Cold is the blast that with morning blows from the river, I ween.

And if I should climb the slope, and pass under a wood's thick

screen, 470

'Neath bushes to sleep, if the deadly exhaustion should pass away,

And the cramping cold, and sweet sleep lulled me the while I lay,

I fear me, the beasts of the field would find me, a helpless prey.”

So as he pondered, he chose the thing that seemed to him good ;

And he slowly and wearily rose, and he spied by the river a wood

In a place with a clear wide view ; and he found two olives there,

From roots intermingled they grew ; one wild, one fruitful-fair.

No winds blowing mistily-wet through that thick covert could pierce,

Nor the dash of the shower, nor yet the sun, were he never so fierce,

So densely the boughs overhead intertwined ; and Odysseus crept 480

Underneath, and the leaves for a bed to a broad high heap he swept ;

For wealth of leaves had been shed, enough two men to screen,

Yea, three should it hide, in the winter-tide, were it never so keen.

And the woe-worn hero smiled for joy at the sight thereof :

And he lay in the midst, and he piled him a warm thick covering

above.

And, as one in a lonely place that dwelleth, a neighbourless wight,

Will thrust a billet ablaze under ashes, to keep it alight,

Saving a live fire-seed, that he go not far away

To rekindle the same at his need,—so covered with leaves he lay.

Then, his ache of sore travail to end, did Pallas Athenê pour 490

Sweet sleep on the eyes of her friend, with forgetfulness flooding

him o'er.

BOOK VI.

How a princess went to the linen-washing, and had pity on
Odysseus.

SO Odysseus, the man woe-worn, in a restful slumber lay,
With toil and with sleep overborne. But Athenê hied her away
To the land and the folk Phæacian : in Ephyre dwelt they of old
Hard by the Cyclop nation, the haughty and overbold,
Who harried them day by day, being mightier in strength of hand ;
So Nausithous led them away, and they gat them out of the land.
And to Scheria he brought them, afar from the haunts of grasping
foes, [city arose.
And with walls to fence them from war, and with dwellings, a
And the king divided the land, and fanes to the Gods did he raise,
Till, stricken by fate's strong hand, he passed to the unseen place. 10
And Alcinous reigned in his stead, with the wisdom of heaven wise.
And unto his palace sped the Maid of the flashing eyes ;
For still in her deepest thought the return of Odysseus she kept.
And she came to a cunningly wrought fair chamber, wherein there
A maiden, lovely of face and of form as the Goddesses are, [slept
The child of the king of the race, Nausicaa peerlessly fair.
There were handmaids twain lying there—the Graces had given
them a dower
Of beauty exceeding fair—and barred were the doors of her bower.
But Pallas Athenê, light as a wind-breath, slipt to her bed,
And there in the silent night she bowed down over her head 20
In the shape of Nausicaa's friend, the daughter of Dymas the sea-
king— [wed—
By youth, by all dreams that unite young hearts, were their spirits
So with her dreams did she blend, and the maid's soul heard her
speaking :
“ How is it Nausicaa's mother hath borne so careless a child ?
Thy garments are lying uncared for, with all their brightness defiled.
And thy marriage is near, when thou must be attired in beauteous
array,

And must give gay raiment to those that escort the bride on her way ;

For from seemly and brave attire cometh good report of the bride,
And the hearts of her father and mother are filled with joy and pride.

Then let us away to the washing as soon as the day is begun ; 30
And I will go with thee to help, that the work may be speedily done, [won ;

For the maidenhead-girdle shall soon be untied for a sweet bride
Seeing many Phæacian princes already come hither to woo,

The sons of the selfsame land whereof is thine own birth too.

Come then, petition the king thy father with earliest dawn
That he bid them harness the mules and the waggon, to carry thereon

Thy sashes and flowing robes, and the rugs all brightly dyed :

Yea, for Nausicaa's self it were more for her honour to ride

Than to walk, for afar from the town are the tanks by the riverside."

So when she had ended her say went Pallas Athenê hasting 40
To the heights of Olympus away, where shineth the home everlasting,

Where never the rough winds blow, no drenching rain falls there,
Nor the drifting pall of the snow, but the heavens are cloudlessly fair
With eternal summer-glow, and with radiance filling the air :

There amid bliss unbroken the high Gods dwell evermore. [shore.
So the Grey-eyed, when she had spoken, flashed to the heavenly

Then Dawn, the splendour-throned, the bands of the maid's sleep
sundered, [wondered,

And her beautiful raiment she donned, the while at her dream she
And forth through the palace she hied her, to speak to her parents dear. [near ; 50

And her mother was sitting beside the hearth with her handmaids
And the purple wool did she spin. But the princess found her father
Going forth to the place wherein the princes were wont to gather ;
For the lords of the land in their pride were awaiting him, counsel to take. [spake :

But his daughter stole to the side of the father she loved, and she
" Father, dear father, and couldst thou not get me ready the car
High-borne on its shapely wheels ? I am fain to take to the river
My beautiful garments, to wash them therein, for that soiled they are.
It is seemly that thou thyself shouldst wear clean raiment, whenever
Thou dost sit in the council-chamber along with the lords of the land.

And five dear sons thou hast, the pride of thy palace-hall— 60
There be two that have taken a wife, there be three in the bloom of young life—

And in clothes fresh-washen delight they ever to take their stand
In the dance ; and it falleth to me to take thought for the raiment of all."

So spake she, but could not name her thought of becoming a bride
To her father, for very shame, but he knew, and he gently replied :
“ Darling, I grudge not the mules, neither aught that beside thou
canst name.

Go, and the serving-men shall set the polished frame
High up on the shapely wheels, and shall fittingly harness the same.”

So he gave command to his men as he said, and they straightway
obeyed : [70

And the car from the stables then they drew, and ready they made ;
And they brought up the mules to the wain, and they harnessed the
team thereto.

And garments whose brilliant grain was of many a lovely hue
Out of her chamber she bore, and high on the car she piled.

And her mother laid good store of food in a chest for her child :

And meats did she put therein, and wine with flame-flushed face,

Filling a great goatskin,—and the maiden took her place

On the wain, and in golden flask she gave her the limpid oil,

That the girls, having ended their task, might bathe and anoint
after toil. [gay gleam,

And she took the whip, and she drew through her fingers the reins'
And she lashed, and away they flew, and clattered the hoofs of the
team. 80

On, without stint or stay, the maid and her raiment they bare,
Not alone, but through all the way her companions her handmaids
were. [ful stream,

And when they were come to the river fair-flowing with beauti-

There were cisterns brimful ever, and gushing with laughter-gleam

The water upwelled from below, it was pure and abundant enow

To wash the foulest white, be they never so grimed to the sight.

And there they unharnessed the team from the wain, and let them
go ; [grass growing

And they drove them along by the stream, to graze on the sweet
By the wrinkled whirl and the dimpled swirl of the flood fair-flow-
ing. [90

Then each sweet maiden with arms full-laden came from the wain,

And each cast down her load where in shadow the water flowed,

And the clothes in the cisterns they trode, in rivalry toiling amain.

And after the maidens had washed all stain and defilement away,

They took them and spread them each after other arow on the
beach,

Where, by sweep of the tide updashed, the ridge of the shingle lay.

And they bathed, and with glossy gleam of the oil did their bodies
shine :

Thereafter beside the stream they sat them down to dine,

Waiting until the sun should have dried the clothes on the shore.

And so, when the meal was done, and the joy of the feast was o'er,

They tossed their veils away, and at ball they fell to play. 100

And the white-armed princess led the sport with a rhythmic chant :

And the stately grace of her head was as hers whose white feet
haunt

Taygetus' long-ridged height, or Erymanth's pine-woods drear,
With shafts that leap after the flight of the boar and the dappled
deer, [side,

While the daughters of him whose shield is the Aegis sport at her
The beautiful nymphs of the field, and Leto beholds her with pride;
And by face and by radiant head above the rest is she tall,
And, where lovely is every one, they are all by her outshone;
So did the maid unwed outshine her handmaids all.

But when it was time that again they should fare on the home-
ward way, 110
And should harness the mules to the wain, and should fold the
Athenè the flashing-eyed had another purpose then, [garments gay,
That Odysseus should waken and gaze on the maid of the beautiful
face,

And that she should be his guide to the town of Phæacian men.
It was then that the princess tossed the ball unto one of her girls,
But it missed her, and lo, it was lost in the river's eddying swirls;
And loudly they shrieked thereat, and the hero awoke with a start;
And he rose, and pondering sat, as he spake to himself in his heart:
"Ah me, what manner of men shall I find in this strange place?
Are they savage of mood and brutal, a justice-scorning race, 120
Or folk that be kindly to strangers, that reverence the Gods on
high? [outcry,—

'Twas but now that around me there pealed as of maidens a ringing
Surely of nymphs, that haunt the precipitous crests of the hills,
Or the grassy reaches of meadow-land, and the fountain-rills!
Or perchance I am nigh unto men, the children of earth that be:
Go to now, I will myself make trial thereof, and see."

Thus as Odysseus spake, he crept from the copse-wood dense:
But or ever he left the brake, his broad hand snapped from thence
A bough leaf-laden, to hide his nakedness from sight: 130
And as comes from the mountain-side a lion in pride of his might,
With his hide from the rain rough-staring and blown by the wind,
but his eyes

With a terrible fire are glaring, as swiftly he comes to surprise
The kine, or the sheep, or the deer, and his hunger maketh him
bold, [built fold;
As he prowls for the flock, to draw near to the fence of the strong-
So did Odysseus pass from the covert, and set his face
Toward the maidens, unclothed as he was, for the man was in des-
perate case.

But terrible did he appear, with the sea-scum fouled all o'er;
And scattered they ran in their fear to the sand-spits fringing the
But Alcinous' daughter remained alone, for Athenè gave [shore.
A spirit her limbs that sustained, and a heart unblenching and
brave: 140

And facing him thus she stayed, and Odysseus pondered there
Whether, clasping the beautiful maid by her knees, he should utter
his prayer,

Or should hold him aloof, yet with prayer inclining her heart unto
pity, [the city.

Should petition for raiment to wear, and should ask of the way to
And thus as he pondered, weighing each counsel, this seemed good,
From afar to address her, praying compassion, aloof as he stood,
Lest, clasping her knees, he should stir up wrath in the heart of the
maid.

And lowly he knelt unto her, and with wise words gently he said :

“ I bow the knee unto thee, O Queen, be thou mortal or god.

If so be thou art one of the Deathless that dwell in the sky-dome
broad, 150

Likest thou art unto Artemis, daughter of Zeus, I ween,

In the majesty of thine height, in the charm of thy stately mien.

But and if thou be one of the mortals that dwell on the face of the
earth,

Thrice happy thy father must be, and the mother who gave thee
birth : [they see

And the hearts of thy brothers, methinks, when a blossom so fair
Float on the breath of the dance, must glow with delight for thee.

O happy beyond all others the heart of the man, I ween,

Who shall win thee by gifts for his own, who shall take for his
household's queen.

• For never such mortal as thou have I seen in all my days,
Nor man, nor woman ; and reverence fills me the while I gaze. 160

Only once by the Sun-god's altar in Delos I chanced to espy

So stately a shaft of a palm that gracefully grew thereby,—

For thither I came on a time, with a goodly array behind me,

On a journey, where many an evil hap was destined to find me,—

And even as I marvelled, to whom it never had fallen to see

Ere then, from the bosom of earth uprising so goodly a tree,—

Even so with astonished amaze do I look on thee, peerless maiden,

Not daring to touch thy knees, who with trouble and sorrow am
laden.

Yestreen, on the twentieth day, I escaped from the sea at last ;

So long was I hurled by the billows, and driven by the passionate
blast 170

From the isle of Ogygia : now hath a God cast me hither ashore,

Doubtless to suffer again, for many a sharp pang more

The Gods will give me, I trow, or ever my troubles be o'er.

Have pity upon me, O Queen : out of manifold woes unto thee

First of all mortals I come, and I wot not who they be

That dwell in the city and land ; they are all unknown unto me.

Show me the town, and give me a covering round me to fling,

If perchance, as thou cam'st, some wrap of the linen thou hither
didst bring.

So may the Gods unto thee whatsoe'er thou desirest afford,
 The love of a husband, a home, and the union of happy accord. 180
 For of all good things they bestow, this blessing doth far excel,
 When the husband and wife with hearts in loving agreement dwell
 In a house : there is jealousy-pain in the soul of each envious foe,
 And their friends are glad ;—but the depth of their bliss they only
 may know."

Then in reply unto him the white-armed princess began :
 "Stranger, thou seemest neither a wicked nor witless man.
 'Tis Olympian Zeus that to all their portion of blessings doth
 measure,
 To the just and the unjust too, unto each man after his pleasure ;
 And thou must endure this thing, for doubtless 'tis given of his
 hand.

But now, inasmuch as thou thus art come to our city and land, 190
 Raiment shall not be denied thee, nor whatsoever beside
 He claimeth of right that cometh a suppliant trouble-tried.
 I will point thee the way to the town, and the name of the folk will
 I tell ;

For behold, Phæacians are they in the city and country that dwell ;
 And I am Alcinous' daughter, the child of the king of the land ;
 And the might and the power of the folk Phæacian lies in his
 hand."

She spake, and she lifted her voice, and she cried to her maids as
 they ran :

"Tarry, my handmaidens, why do ye flee at the sight of a man ?
 What, do ye deem him a foe ? I tell you, there breathes not the
 wight, [to fight.

Neither shall be at all, that shall come to our land with her people
 For dear to the gods are we, and afar from the nations we dwell 200
 Ringed round with the multitudinous wash of the broad sea-swell,
 In the uttermost parts of the earth, and her traffickers come not
 But this is a hapless wanderer, misery-driven here. [near.

Him must we kindly entreat ; for the poor and the strangers are all
 Children of Zeus : that ye give them is blest, be it never so small.
 Then hasten, my maidens, and give to the stranger to eat and to
 drink,

And wash him under the lee of the wind on the river's brink."

Then the handmaidens stood and cried to each other, "Come !
 fear not !"

And they led him down to the side of the stream, to a sheltered
 spot, 210

As Nausicaa gave command, the child of the king of the land.
 And a tunic there did they place, and a robe for Odysseus to don ;
 And beside them upon the grass a golden oil-cruse shone,
 And they bade him wash where the flood of the beautiful river ran ;
 But amidst of the maidens stood and spake the godlike man :
 "Handmaids, I pray you to stand aloof, till I wash the soil

Of the brine from my shoulders myself, and anoint my body with
oil ;

For long hath my skin been unsleeked ; but before you I will not
For to make me naked in maidens' sight doth my spirit abash."

So did he speak, and they went, and they told the sea-king's
daughter. 220

And his back all brine-besprent he laved in the river water ;
And over the salt that clave to his shoulders the stream he flung,
And the slimy ooze of the wave from his hair with his fingers he
wrung. [anointed ;

So he washed him from head to foot, and with odorous oil he
And about him the raiment he put that the maiden's care had
appointed.

And statelier length of limb and goodlier breadth of frame
Did Athenê bestow upon him, the Goddess of Zeus that came ;
And down from his head there streamed the wealth of his wavy
hair, [rare.

Like the hyacinth-blossom it seemed, with its hue of the purple
And even as a craftsman wise that Hephæstus and Pallas have
taught 230

Full many a cunning device, of whose hands rare treasures are
wrought, [case,

With the sheen of the gold overspread will a vessel of silver en-
So on his shoulders and head did Athenê pour down grace.

Then did he turn him aside, and down on the sea-shore sat,
Radiant in grace and in pride of beauty : the maiden thereat
Marvelled, and thus she addressed her handmaids beautiful-tressed :
" Hearken, my white-armed maidens, to me, and my thought will I
It is not against the will of the Gods in Olympus that dwell [tell :

That yonder man in the land of the godlike Phæacians is seen ;
For he seemed erewhile unto me uncomely of favour and mean, 240
But now is he like to the Gods that dwell in the heaven-dome wide.
I were fain that a man such as he might one day call me his bride,
Some man in my country that dwells—and that here he were willing
to tarry.

But meat and drink to the stranger do ye, my handmaids, carry."

So to her maidens she spake, and they heard her behest, and
obeyed : [they laid.

And the meat and the drink did they take, and before the hero
And with ravenous haste began Odysseus thereof to eat ;

For 'twas long since the woe-worn man had tasted the savour of
meat. [maid ;

But now to another care hath she turned her, the white-armed
And she foldeth the garments fair, and all on the wain hath she laid.
And they harnessed the mules to the yoke, and she mounted, apart
from the rest. [her breast :

And then to Odysseus she spoke, giving words to the thought of
" Stranger, arise : to the city go. I will show thee the way

To the house of my father the wise-souled king, and there I say
 The noblest of all the Phæacian folk shalt thou see with thine eyes.
 But this do thou—for it seemeth to me thou art nothing unwise—
 While yet we shall pass through the fields where the toils of the
 husbandmen are, [car

So long stay thou by my maidens, and follow the mules and the
 With whatso speed thou mayst; and the way myself will show.

But when we draw nigh to the city,—around it a wall doth go 260
 With towers embattled; on either hand is a haven fair

With a narrow approach between, and the shapely ships lie there
 Fringing the road; each man's in a several dock doth ride;

And there is Poseidon's fane, with the market on either side,
 Walled by colossal stones that are deeply embedded there.

And as for the folk of the land, ship-craft is their only care;

For twisting of cables and smoothing of oars are the arts they
 know:

Naught do the sons of Phæacia reckon of the quiver and bow; [love,
 But the mast and the oar and the graceful lines of the galley they
 And over the hoary sea in these they delight to rove. 270

Now I shrink from the bitter sneers of the people, lest ere long

They mock me, seeing my folk are exceeding bold of their tongue.

And perchance one worse than the rest shall meet us upon the way:

'Lo now! who is this—this stranger,' methinks I hear him say,

'That follows Nausicaa?—comely, I ween, and tall is he!

Where hath she lighted upon him?—'tis doubtless her husband to

Is it a shipwrecked wight she hath made her companion here, [be.

A man from a far-away land, because there are no men near?

Or perchance some God long wooed hath descended to take her to
 wife, [days of her life. 280

And the love that hath answered her prayers shall be true all the

'Tis better, forsooth, that gadding about for herself she should
 light [slight.

On a husband of outland race, for her countrymen all doth she
 She had many a princely suitor, but lo, they are naught in her sight!'

So will they say, and the taunt and the sneer upon me will they

Yea, and indignant were I, were another to do such a thing [fling.

As to recklessly mingle with men, in her father's and mother's
 despite,

Or ever their hands be united in wedlock in all men's sight.

Now therefore give heed to this word of mine, to the end that my

The sooner may send thee home, fulfilling thy heart's desire: [sire

Thou shalt find a fair grove of Athenê anigh to the way thou art
 going, 290

A poplar-grove, and a meadow around, and a fountain flowing.

And there is the park of my sire, with its fruitful pleasure-ground:

And if one should shout from the city, thou thence might'st catch
 the sound.

There sit thou down, and tarry awhile, till we shall be gone

Into the city, and unto the house of my sire shall have won.
When thou thinkest that we must be there, thou shalt enter the
town, and enquire

For Alcinous' palace, the hall of the king, my high-souled sire.
Full easy it is to be known, and a babe might in sooth be thy guide ;
For no Phæacian mansion can match with the stately pride
Of the house of the hero-king. But thou, when thy feet shall have
come 300

Into the court, and under the shadow of that proud dome,
Hastily pass through the hall until thou shalt come to the place
Where sitteth my mother beside the hearth in the ruddy blaze,
Spinning the yarn sea-purple—a marvel to look on is it—
And she leaneth against a pillar : behind her the handmaids sit.
And there is the throne of my father set, whereon at his ease
He sitteth and quaffeth the wine as a God in the midst of these.
Howbeit by him shalt thou pass, and thine hands shall encompass
the knees

Of our mother ; and so shalt thou speedily see with rejoicing the day
Of thy homeward-return, although thy country be far away. 310
For shouldst thou find grace in her sight, good hope shall be thine
once more [shore.]

To behold thy friends, and to come to thine home and thy fatherland
Thus when she had spoken, her team she touched with the shin-
ing thong ; [along.

And they passed from the sunlit stream, and lightly they ambled
And the mules with skill did she rein, that her car should not out-
strip

The man and the damsel-train, and she heedfully handled the whip.

And the sun went down, and lo, they came to a grove most fair
Sacred to Pallas ; and so the hero sat down there.

And he cried to the daughter of Zeus, and besought her to hearken
his prayer :

“ Hear me, thou child of the Aegis-bearer, unwearied Power ! 320
Hearken in any wise now, who didst not hear in the hour
Of my shipwreck, what time the Earth-shaker o'erwhelmed me
amidst of the sea.

Grant that Phæacia's people may now show kindness to me.”

So did he speak in prayer, and Pallas Athenê heard.

But she did not appear to him there manifested, because she feared
Her father's brother ; for sore was the wrath in his soul that burned
Against Odysseus, before to the land of his sires he returned.

BOOK VII.

How Odysseus came unto the halls of the Sea-King.

THERE in his need thus prayed Odysseus the man toil-worn.
But on to the city the maid by the strength of the mules was borne.

And when she was come to the fair royal palace of glorious fame,
She halted the mule-team there, and her brothers around her came,
Each one like an immortal: the beasts they unharnessed, and bare
In through the stately portal the raiment clean and fair.

But the maiden her chamber sought, and therein was there kindled
By Eurymedusa, brought overseas long ago for her sire [a fire
Out of Apeiré-land, when the ships came back from a raid.

For thereafter the warrior-band had chosen the captive maid 10
As a prize for the king their lord, whom all the Phæacian folk
As one of the Gods adored, and hearkened with awe when he spoke.
So it fell that the captive maid was the nurse of his white-armed
child:

By her was the supper laid, and the brands on the hearth were piled.

Then rose Odysseus to go to the town, but Athenê's care
Made round about him to flow a veil of misty air,
Lest any Phæacian should meet him, as nigh to the city he came,
And with scoffing words should greet him, and ask of his nation
and name.

But or ever the hero's feet in the lovely town might stand,
Did the grey-eyed Goddess meet him: Athenê was hard at hand 20
In the shape of a maiden that bare a pitcher upon her head.

And she stood in front of him there, and Odysseus the godlike said:

"Prithee, my child, wilt thou guide me to where the palace doth
Of Alcinous, lord of the land? A woe-worn stranger am I [lie
From a far-away shore who am come; and all unknown unto me
Are the men that dwell in the town and the fields that around it be."

Made answer to him Athenê, the Goddess of flashing eyes:
"Father stranger, the house will I show thee whereof thou enquir-
est: it lies

Hard by my noble father's. But pass thou in silence on—
I will guide thee—nor look thou on any man : ask thou question of
none. 30

For as for the men of the city, no lovers of strangers they are,
Nor give they kindly welcome to any that come from afar.
In the gifts of the Earth-shaker trust they : in fleet ships over the
Pass they ; and swift as a wing or a thought their galleys be." [sea

Thus as Athenê replied, she turned, and the way she led
Hastily on, and he hied him close on the Goddess's tread.
And none of their coming was ware, through the midst of the town
as they passed ;

And, for all the thousands there, no eye on Odysseus was cast ;
For the bright-haired Goddess dread suffered not that this should
befall ; [all. 40

But a mist divine had she shed o'er her friend, to conceal him from
And Odysseus wondering stares at the havens with myriad throng
Of ships, and the market-squares, and the ramparts lofty and long ;
A marvel to see were they, with their palisade-breastwork crowned.

But when they were come on their way to the king's house far-
renowned,

"Lo stranger, this is the palace whereof thou hast asked of me,"
The Goddess began : "heaven-fostered princes herein shalt thou
Banqueting. Enter, and have no fear : 'tis the brave that are [see
Masters of men, and they prosper, though strangers they be from
afar. [name ;

First in the halls shalt thou come to the queen, whom Arêtê they
And she sprang from the selfsame sires whereof Alcinous came.

First was Nausithous got by the earth-shaking Lord of the sea, [50
Peribœa the mother that bare him,—the fairest of women was she :
And the youngest daughter she was of Eurymedon mighty-souled,
Who reigned in the olden time o'er the giants, the overbold ;
But destruction he brought on himself and his folk overweening of
yore :

Even her did Poseidon embrace, and a son unto him she bore,
Nausithous mighty-hearted, who ruled in Phæacia once.
Rhexênor, Alcinous, these Nausithous begat, his sons :
But the first by the Lord of the Silver Bow in his bridal bower
Was smitten, and left no son to sit on the throne of his power. 60
One only daughter he left, and Alcinous married her then,
And honoured, as never was wife revered among earth-born men.
She was not as the women are, to their lords in subjection who
bow ;

But she had heart-worship of him, yea, so is she honoured now
Of her sons and her husband, yea, and of all the people, I ween ;
For when through the city she goeth they joyfully hail their queen ;
And, as though 'twere a Goddess that passed, with awe stand
gazing round ;

For a noble soul in her and an excellent spirit are found :

Yea, even the men she setteth at one, when quarrels arise.
 Now therefore, if so it befall that thou find grace in her eyes, 70
 Good hope shall be thine to behold thy friends, and again to come
 Back to the land of thy fathers, back to thine high-roofed home."

So spake she, and suddenly passed from his sight as a breath of
 the wind,
 O'er the harvestless sea flying fast ; and she left fair Scheria behind,
 And she came unto Marathon's plain, and to Athens, the broad-
 way'd town ;

And she entered the mighty fane of Erechtheus of old renown.

And Odysseus held on his way to the palace ; but ere he pressed
 The brass on the threshold that lay, strange thoughts arose in his
 breast ;

For with radiance as of the sun or the moon that walketh in light
 The house of Alcinous shone over all its stately height. 80

Far stretched the brazen walls, till within they were lost to the view,
 Flanking the stately halls, and around was a cornice of blue.

There were golden doors within, that massy pile to enclose ;

And pillars of silver sheen on the brazen threshold rose.

And of silver the lintel's pride, and the handle-ring was of gold ;

And dogs were on either side of golden and silver mould :

The palace-warders were they, which Hephæstus with magical skill
 Wrought to continue for aye, being deathless and ageless still.

And seats all round the walls upon either side were arrayed

From the doors far down through the halls, and robes thereover
 were laid, 90

Daintily woven fine, the labour of woman's hand.

And there at the feast and the wine sat the lords of Phæacian land,
 With their goblets crowned through the whole year's round, a
 princely band.

There, each on a pedestal's height, did golden statues stand

Uplifting torches bright, so that many a ruddy brand

Was flinging a blaze of light on the banqueting-throng through the
 night.

And fifty handmaids plied their toils through the mansion wide :

There were some at the quern that were grinding the grain with its
 apple-bloom ; [at the loom.

There were some that the yarn were winding, and some that paced

And their restless fingers seemed as though leaves of a poplar
 twinkled ; 100

And adown from their close web streamed the oil thereupon that
 was sprinkled.

For, as for the men, there dwell on the earth none cunning as they
 Over the great sea-swell to speed the ship on her way ;

And the daughters of that land still surpass all other, to whom
 Athenê hath given rare skill in the beautiful works of the loom.

And hard by the doors without was an orchard stretching wide,

Four acres, and round about was a fence upon every side.

And the fat earth fed the root of many a tall tree there,
 The apple-tree, lovely of fruit, the pomegranate-tree, and the pear,
 And the fig with its full sweet taste, and the silvery olive's pride.
 No blight ever cometh to waste their fruit ; nor in summer-tide
 Nor yet in the winter it fails, but softly sighs evermore
 The breath of the western gales that fairy orchard o'er.

Here blossoms are blowing, and there, fruits growing, and there,
 ripe store. [bloom,

There is pear after pear that mellows, new clusters that aye gather
 Fresh apples succeeding their fellows, new figs in the old figs' room.
 And there is a fruitful plot with vines set row upon row, [glow.
 Wherein is a warm cleared spot that is parched by the strong sun's
 There clusters are drying ; but yonder are lying the heaps that grow
 Ever higher, the while they are flinging the spoil into baskets be-
 low. 120

And yonder again they are treading the winefat ; and, right before,
 Setting grapes their blossoms are shedding, and others are darken-
 ing o'er.

And there by the last vine-row trim garden-beds are seen

Where the flowers through the long year blow, where the herbs for
 ever are green. [garden-close

Two fountains are there ever-plashing : this fleets through the
 In many a runnel flashing : but that to the palace goes,
 Passing beneath the gate ; and the townsfolk drink thereof.

Such are the gifts that the great Gods gave to the King that they
 love.

Long lingered Odysseus, lost in wonder, as round he cast
 His eyes ; and he seemed as one that dreamed, till, sated at last, 130
 The shining threshold he crossed, and into the palace he passed.
 And their lords and their mighty men he beheld at the banquet
 there.

They were pouring libations then to the mighty Argus-slayer :
 'Twas the last libation of all, ere they turned them unto their rest.
 But on through the stately hall Odysseus the godlike pressed,
 With the mist encompassed around that Athenê about him had
 poured,

Till the queen Arêtê he found, and beside her Alcinous her lord.
 At the knees of Arêtê he bowed, and around them his arms he
 flung ;

And gone was the magic cloud that about his body had clung.
 And a great hush fell on the hall as they saw the hero there ; 140
 And they gazed, and they marvelled all. But Odysseus began his
 " Arêtê, child of Rhexênor the godlike prince of the seas, [prayer :
 Out of manifold troubles I come to thine husband and unto thy
 knees,

And to these that be banqueting here, unto whom may the high
 Gods give

Blessing, and length of days, and children to whom they shall leave

Their wealth in their palace-halls, and the honours the people bestow :

But I pray you, help me hence, that away to my home I may go
With speed, for afar from my friends am I suffering woe upon woe."

So when he had ended, low in the ashes taking his place [150
He sat by the hearth's red glow ; and none spake word for a space ;
Till after a long time spoke Echenëus the greybeard hoar,
The oldest of all the folk that dwell on Phæacia's shore,
Eloquent ever in word, and in wisdom surpassing the rest ;
And his heart with pity was stirred, and the lord of the land he
addressed :

" Alcinous, not for thine honour is this, neither seemly is it,
That a stranger low on the ground on the hearth mid the ashes
should sit ;

But all these tarrying wait for the word that thou shalt reply.
Come now therefore, and lift up the stranger, and seat him on high
On a silver-studded throne, and command that yet once more
The henchmen mingle the wine, that we a libation may pour 160
Unto Thunderer Zeus, who taketh the suppliant under his care ;
And then let the stewardess give him to eat of the best of her fare."

When the mighty lord of the land heard that, it was good in his
eyes ; [wise,

And he stooped, and he took by the hand Odysseus the crafty and
Out of the ashes to raise him, and seat on a shining throne.

And Laodamas yielded his place, the good king's gallant son,
Who still sat near him, and held him dear above every one.

And the bright spring-water was brought by a maiden, and poured
from a ewer

Golden, beautiful-wrought, into laver of silver pure,
To wash withal, and she spread a table of polished sheen 170
By his side, and served was the bread by the stewardess modest of
mien ;

And with meats she covered it o'er, giving freely of all her store.
And Odysseus of woes long-tried ate bread and drank of the wine.
And then to the henchman cried Alcinous, hero divine :

" Pontonous, mingle the bowl, and bear of the wine once more
To each several guest ; for now a libation to Zeus will we pour,
The friend of the friendless strangers and all that compassion im-
plore."

So Pontonous mingled and filled up the wine that doth gladden
the soul, [bowl.

And they served ; then first each spilled the sacrifice-drops from the
But when they had poured the libation and drunk, and were satisfied,
Then to the lords Phæacian the king Alcinous cried : [180

" Harken to me, ye princes and lords of Phæacian land,
That so I may utter the words that mine heart in my breast doth
command.

Now that the banquet is done, turn each to your rest, going home.

To-morrow morn shall the old men all to our palace come : [burn
Then will we welcome our guest in our halls : fair victims shall
To the Gods : we will then take thought for the stranger's home-
return, [care,

That without more hardship or toil he may go, sent away by our
With speed and with joy to the land of his fathers, how distant
soe'er,

And be vexed in the space between by no more sorrow or pain, 190
Till the day when his feet shall stand on his fatherland-soil again.

And there shall he suffer his weird, which the Fates, the Spinners
dread,

In the hour when his mother bare him, span with his natal thread.
But if he be one of the Gods that down from the sky hath de-
scended,

Herein there is some new thing of the Heaven-abiders intended.
For alway the Gods ere this have been wont to appear to our eyes
In their own bright shapes, as we offer the hecatomb-sacrifice ;
And they sit in the self-same place, and they feast with us, each on
his throne ;

Yea, and if one should encounter them whiles that he fareth alone,
No whit do they hide them ; for near unto them by our lineage are
Even as the savage tribes of the Giants and Cyclops be." [we, 200

Then unto him keen-witted Odysseus made instant reply :

" Alcinous, think not so ! not like to the Gods am I,—
The blessed Immortal Ones who dwell in the broad-arched sky,—
Neither in stature nor form, but to mortals in saddest truth :

And if any ye know woe-ridden beyond their fellows, in sooth
Even to them were I equal in heaped-up measure of ill.

Yea, and of many a trouble more could I tell thee still, [bear :—
Even all the things that the Gods of their malice have made me to
But suffer me now to eat, for all my burden of care ; 210

For no such shameless thing as the ravening belly is found ; [bound,
For it biddeth us bear it in mind, and by strong constraint are we
Though never so much woe-worn, heart-laden with anguish sore,
Even as the anguish of heart that is mine ; yet this evermore,
This shameful shameless thing, crieth on me to eat and to drink,
Bidding me fill it, and suffers me not of my troubles to think.

But do ye make haste when the morning appeareth, that I once
more,

The wretched I, of your grace may set foot on my native shore,
After all I have suffered : yea, I were even contented to die,
When my substance and thralls I have seen, and my home with its
roof reared high." 220

So did he answer, and they all praised him, giving advice
To send the stranger away, since the word he had uttered was wise.
And when, the libations done, they had drunk to their hearts'
content,

Homeward away each one to his rest through the gloaming went.

And there mid the stately scene did Odysseus the godlike stay,
 And with him the king and the queen, and close at his side sat they ;
 And the maids 'gan clear the banquet gear from the board away.
 And Arêtê the white-armed spoke—for she knew that raiment again,
 Who had woven the tunic and cloak herself with her handmaid
 train—

And the winged words sped from her lips, and she said full earnestly : 230

“ Stranger, of this thing first am I fain thou wouldst speak unto me :—

Who art thou?—and whence among men?—these garments, of whom were they given ?

Sayest thou not that thou hitherward over the sea wast driven ? ”

Answered Odysseus, the man in manifold counsels keen :

“ Hard were the task to tell from beginning to end, O Queen,
 Of the woes that were meted to me by the dwellers in heaven above.
 But this will I tell unto thee, since thou askest, enquiring thereof :—
 An island lieth afar, with the sea-wash round it rolled ;
 There dwelleth the daughter of Atlas, Calypso the crafty-souled,
 Beautiful-tressed dread Goddess ; and none to her dwelling-place 240
 Come, neither of Gods immortal, nor yet of the deathlings' race.
 But a Power that is not of earth to her hearth brought wretched me,
 Alone ; for the swift white flame of his levin amidst of the sea
 Zeus on my galley hurled, and he utterly dashed it asunder :

Yawned the abyss, and my mates in a moment were all whelmed under. [tight

But I clasped the keel with my arms, and despairingly clutching it
 Nine days was I drifted along : on the tenth, in the black dark night,
 The Gods of their grace brought me to the isle of Ogygia, where
 Dwelleth Calypso, the Goddess dread with beautiful hair.

And she kindly received me, and loved and sustained me, and wont
 to say 250

That ageless withal she would make me, and deathless for ever and
 But never she overpersuaded the heart in this bosom of mine. [aye.

Seven long years a prisoner there did I linger and pine ; [tears.

And the heavenly raiment Calypso had given, I bedewed it with
 But at last it befell unto me, in the eighth of the rolling years,

That then she consented to let me go, yea, bade me depart,

By reason of Zeus's behest, or the changed resolved of her heart.

And she sent me away on a raft strong-knit, and she gave good
 store

Of corn and of wine, and the heavenly attire of her giving I wore ;
 And she sent me a kindly breeze that my craft aye merrily bore.

So seven days and ten o'er the waste of the waters I steered,

Until on the eighteenth day far shadowy hills appeared

Of this your land, and glad was my happy, my hapless heart ;

For O, I was doomed in many a woe to bear my part—

Ah, many a woe which Poseidon the Earth-shaker brought upon me ;

For he stirred up the storm-winds against me, barring my path on
the sea ; [leapt

And he lashed the brine into mountain waves, and the fierce surge
On the raft, and heavily groaning away from her deck was I swept.
There by a hurricane-blast were the beams of the raft scattered
wide :

But I swam on, cleaving the fathomless deep, until I descried 270
Your coast, brought nigh by the winds and the waters ; and there
as I tried

To win to the shore, the surge had hurled me against the land,
As it shocked on the huge overbeetling crags by the cheerless strand ;
But I beat out seaward, and swam on still, till I came unto where
Seemed the fairest landing place, for the mouth of a river was there ;
No barrier of rocks ; but a screen from the wind was the steep
bank's height. [the night.

And I reeled forth there, and for breath sank down : then came
And up from the side of the river I went, from the heaven-fed
flood ;

And I laid me down to sleep in a copse, and the leaves of a wood
Around me I piled ; and deep, deep sleep did a God down pour. 280
There amid leaves, with a nightmare-pain at my sad heart's core,
I slept through the livelong night, and the morn, and the heat of
the day ;

And the sun was low, and from me sweet sleep departed away.
And there on the beach I beheld the maidens of her, thy daughter,
Sporting, and she in the midst, and like to the Gods I thought her.
And I made supplication to her, and she lacked not wisdom of mind,
Nay, had more than a man, meeting one so young, had looked to
find ;

For they that be young are thoughtless ever, but she of her grace
Gave to me plenty of bread, and of wine with its flame-flushed
face :

In the river she bathed me, and gave unto me these garments ye see.
Herein, for all my sorrow, all truth have I told unto thee." [290

Out spake Alcinous then, and he answered the godlike wight :

" Stranger, in sooth herein was my child not minded aright,
In that she nowise brought thee on to our palace home [come.
Along with her maids ; yet to her didst thou first as a suppliant

Spake unto him Odysseus with answer wary and mild :

" Hero, upbraid not for this, I beseech thee, thy noble child.
For indeed she bade me follow along with her maids as they came ;
But I would not do this thing, by reason of fear and shame,
Lest perchance thou shouldst have indignation of soul, beholding
me then ; 300

For jealous as touching the stranger are we of the tribes of men."

Then to the hero Alcinous instant reply addressed :

" Stranger, not such is this heart of mine within my breast
As to break into causeless wrath : nay, better the right is to follow.

And I would unto Zeus Allfather, Athenê, and to Apollo,
 That thou being such as thou art, and with thine heart even as mine,
 Mightest take my daughter to wife, be allied to my royal line,
 And here abide : a house would I give thee, and substance enow
 If so thou wert minded to stay :—yet none shall forbid thee to go
 Of all the Phæacians,—Zeus forefend that this should be so ! 310
 For to-morrow about this time I ordain thy departure to be.

Then shalt thou lay thee down overborne by slumber, and thee
 They shall speed until thou be brought on over a sleeping sea
 To thy fatherland-home : yea, whithersoever thou fain wouldst fare,
 Ay, though yet farther away than the isle of Eubœa it were,
 Which, of all lands seen of my people, they name the remotest
 shore, [bore,

Even they that beheld it the day bright-haired Rhadamanthus they
 When he went to look upon Tityos, great Earth-mother's son ;
 And thither they passed, and it wearied them not, though the goal
 was won [320

And they came back home in the selfsame day, so quick was the run.
 And thy heart shall take knowledge of these my galleys, how
 peerless they be, [ing sea."

And my youths how unmatched with the oar in uptossing the foam—
 Then did Odysseus rejoice, the man long trouble-oppressed ;
 And in prayer he uplifted his voice, and he uttered the thought of
 his breast :

"Grant, O Zeus Allfather, that all that the king hath said
 He so may accomplish ; then shall his glory unquenchably spread
 O'er the corn-giving earth, and I to the land of my sires shall be

So did the hero hold sweet converse there with the king. [sped."
 But Arêtê the white-armed told the maids of the household to bring
 Into the porch a bed, and the rugs on the same to throw 330

Dyed of a crimson-red, and carpets thereover to strow,
 And above warm mantles to lay, to cover himself withal.
 And bearing a torch went they from her presence out of the hall ;
 And swiftly the task they plied, and made ready the stately bed ;
 And back to the hero they hied to bid him thither, and said :

"Go forth to thy sleep, fair guest, for thy bed is prepared for thee."
 They spake, and to him that rest seemed welcome and sweet to be.

There in the rich-wrought bed, in the great porch echoing wide,
 With the dews of sleep overshadowed, lay Odysseus of woes long-tried.
 And the queen Arêtê the while the couch of Alcinous shared, 340
 In a chamber of that proud pile, which the hands of the wife had
 prepared.

BOOK VIII.

How Odysseus was at the sports and the feasting of the sea-folk.

ROSE-FINGERED from mists of the night sprang Dawn, and the shadows fled.

Straightway the sacred might of Alcinous rose from his bed.
And Odysseus arose with the light, city-smiter of heaven-born race ;
And Alcinous' sacred might went forth with him unto the place
Where the folk of the Sea-god's town were assembled hard by the
So came they, and each sat down on a polished marble seat [fleet.
Anigh to each other ; but o'er the city Athenê went,
And the form of the herald she bore that ever the wise king sent ;
For still was her purpose set that the hero his home should reach.
And to every man that she met she uttered the bidding speech :

“ Up and away, Phæacian chieftains and princes of might !
Go to the folkmote-place, to hear of a stranger-wight
Who came to the prudent-souled Alcinous' halls yestreen
Sea-tost, and like to the deathless Gods is his form to be seen.”

So with her words she awoke the spirit of each man there ;
And swiftly with gathering folk that thronged to the seats of the square

It was crowded, and many an one beheld with admiring gaze
Laertes' hero-son, for more than mortal grace
Athenê shed upon him all over his head and his shoulders ;
And goodlier length of limb and breadth, in the eyes of beholders 20
She gave him, that all who saw might love him as soon as they came,

And be filled with reverence and awe, and that he in every game
Wherein they should make assay of his manhood, the palm might
But when all assembled were they the gathering-place within, [win.
Amidst of the princely array did Alcinous thus begin :

“ Give ear, ye captains and mighty men of Phæacian land,
To the end I may utter the words that my thoughts in my bosom command.

This stranger,—I know not his name,—to my house came wandering, lost,

Whether from men of the morning-land, or a sundown coast.

For his home-return, for a sure decree thereupon, doth he pray ; 30

And, as ever our wont hath been, let us hasten to send him away :

For of all men that ever have come to my halls, none other beside

Hath been wont to remain here mourning long for return denied.

Come, let us launch on the mighty waters a galley new,

And let them choose from the folk of the young men fifty and two,

Even of such as have proved them our best in the time before.

And ye all shall fitly lash to the thole by the thwart each oar,

And leave her so, and thereafter a hasty meal shall ye take,

When ye come to my palace, and stintless provision for all will I

This is my best to the youths ; but all ye others come, [make.

Ye sceptre-swaying princes, to my fair palace-home,

To the end we may kindly welcome the stranger within mine hall.

Let no man refuse to come : and the minstrel divine shall ye call :

For above all other the Gods have bestowed upon him song-treasure,

To give delight, whensoever in singing his soul taketh pleasure."

So he rose to depart, and they to the palace attended the king :

And the herald hastened away, the minstrel divine to bring.

And fifty and two young men, as the king had given command,

They chose, and they hied them then down unto the white sea-strand.

And as soon as the merry crew to the sea and the galley were come,

Down to the deep they drew and they launched her forth on the
foam ;

And the sail and the tapering mast they brought, and they laid them
along [thong,—

And they lashed the long oars fast, each one with its leathern

All things in order due,—and they spread the white sail wide ;

And off the land in the blue sea moored her at anchor to ride.

And away they hied them then to the palace stately and strong ;

And there through the porches men were streaming, a mighty throng ;

And the halls were loud with the murmuring crowd of old and
young. [they slay,

Then straight, at the king's behest, twelve sheep of the flock did

And eight of his white-tusked swine, and two of his trail-foot kine ;

And they flayed them and daintily dressed, and they spread the
banquet's array. [strings,

Then the henchman came bringing anear the master of magical

The man whom the Muse held dear, giving goodly and evil things,—

For she took from the bard his sight, but she gave him the song-
gift sweet,—

And he led the minstrel-wight to a silver-studded seat

By a pillar stately and tall, the throng of the feasters among ;

And above, from a nail on the wall, the lyre clear-ringing was hung

By the henchman over his head, and his hands to the place did he
guide ;

And he brought him the basket of bread, and a table he set by his side,

And a goblet of wine to slake his thirst whensoever he would.

So they put forth their hands to take of the stintless store of food :

But as soon as the body's desire for the feast was banished away,

Then did the Muse inspire the bard with a glory-lay,

The tale whose fame uprose to the height of the broad-arched skies,

How the heroes became fierce foes at the Gods' high sacrifice,

What time the strife awoke of Odysseus and Peleus' son,

And terrible words they spoke ; and gladdened was only one,

Agamemnon, the king of men, when the noblest Achæans contended :

But he knew in his heart that then his troubles were well-nigh ended ; [80

For that was the sign that the God had given from the holy place

When the great stone threshold he trod in Pytho, seeking his face,

What time the beginning of woe upon Trojan and Greek was rolled,

Since great Zeus ordered it so by his changeless will from of old.

Proudly the melody rolled of the minstrel's noble lay :

But Odysseus gathered a fold of his mantle crimson-gay,

And he drew it over his face, and he veiled his goodly head,

For shame lest Phæacia's race should witness the tears that he shed.

When the song and the music died, and the minstrel paused to rest,

His eyes the hero dried, and he drew from his head the vest ;

And he lifted the goblet to pour from the massy gold a libation. 90

But as soon as the song once more rang out, when the lords Phæacian

Called on the minstrel to sing, for they loved to list to the strain,

Over his head did he fling the mantle, and wept again. [ran ;

And all this while were there none that marked his tears as they

But the king took knowledge alone of the grief of the godlike man,

And he heard him heavily moan, for that close to his side sat he ;

And straightway he spoke to the oar-loving folk, the sons of the sea ;

" Harken to me, Phæacian captains and princes of might : [sea :

Lo now of the banquet our soul hath drunken its fill of delight ;

And with joy of the feast's yokefellow, the lyre, are we satisfied. [100

But now let us forth to the field, and there shall your prowess be tried

In all manner of athlete-strife, that our guest to his people may tell,

When he comes to his home, how far the sons of Phæacia excel

With the fist, in the leap, and the wrestler's grip, and the foot's swift stride." [their king.

He spake, and he passed from the hall, and the people followed

And the henchman hung to the wall the lyre of the ringing string ;

And he took the bard by the hand, and forth from the hall he drew

Unto whither the lords of the land had hied them the games to view.

So on to the muster-place with a countless throng came they ;

And the flower of the sea-kings' race for the contest arose that day ;

For Akroneôs, and Okyalus, and Elatreus rose ; [110

Ponteus, and Prôreus, and Thôon, and strong Anabêsineôs ;
 Nauteus, and Prymneus, Eretmeus withal, and Anchialus,
 And Pólyneus, son of Tecton's scion Amphialus.
 And Euryalus rose then, like the death-dealing Lord of Fight,
 Naubolus' stately son, who in beauty and stature outshone
 All the Phæacian men, save peerless Laodamas' might.
 Clytonêus and Halius there, and Laodamas forth did stand ;
 Three stalwart sons they were of Alcinous, lord of the land.
 Now first do they make assay of their feet in the race, and they
 dash 120

At their uttermost speed straight away from the mark, and, as
 forward they flash,
 From the feet of them springs sudden dust ; as on wings they fly
 over the plain ;
 And in front of the rest Clytonêus hath pressed in the breathless
 strain : [him there

So he came in the first from the race to his comrades that waited
 By the length of the furrow-space of the mules that drag the share.
 And then did the wrestlers strip, and Euryalus over all
 Prevailed, for his giant grip was resistless in every fall.

And Amphialus sprang light in the leap, overcoming the rest :
 And in speeding the quoit's long flight was Elatreus' arm the best.
 And Laodamas, gallant son of the king, was the champion of fists.

So it fell, that when every one was filled with delight of the lists,
 Laodamas spake to the rest, the prince of the royal line :

" Come friends, let us ask of our guest if aught he can skill to join
 In our trials of manhood. In frame no weakling is he to behold :
 His thighs and his calves are brawny, his arms are mighty of mould :
 And his sinewy neck gives token of strength, and he lacketh naught
 Of vigour, but low by manifold travail his might hath been brought ;
 For nothing there is, I trow, more shrewd than the buffeting sea
 At breaking a man's strength down, though never so stalwart he be."

" Prince," said Euryalus, " thou hast counselled aright ; but thou
 Thyself go to him, and speak the word, and challenge him now."

When Laodamas heard it, good seemed the counsel of Euryalus ;
 And forth in the midst he stood, and he spake to the hero thus :

" Father stranger, approach thou too, renown in our games to win,
 If aught thou knowest of such, and I trow thou hast skill therein :
 For there is no greater renown for a man, while he liveth his life,
 Than to do brave deeds with his feet and his hands in the athlete-
 strife.

Come then, make trial, commanding the cares of thy spirit to flee :
 For behold thy journey is nigh, and already down to the sea [150
 The galley is drawn, and the crew of the same are ready for thee."

But Odysseus the subtle of wit unto him spake answering :

" Laodamas, mock me not in bidding me do this thing :
 For O, much nearer mine heart than games is my burden of care,
 Even all the pain and the toil I have borne, and yet shall bear.

Yea, now as I sit in your midst my heart is far away ;
And only for home, still home, to the king and the people I pray."

Answered him Euryalus to his face with a bitter gibe :

" Even so, good fellow : I ween thou art scarce of the athlete tribe.
There is many a manly sport, but these are not for thee. [160
Rather I count thee a wight such as maketh his trade of the sea,
A skipper of sailors,—the chaffering chapmen that buy and sell,—
With his soul wrapped up in his freight, ever grasping his gains to
swell,

Sharp-eyed to the cargo :—no athlete thou, it were easy to tell."

Sternly replied keen-witted Odysseus with lowering brow :

" Man ! thou hast spoken thy shame : rash-witted, I trow, art thou !
So is it : the Gods give not unto all gifts highest of price,
Neither goodly stature, nor sense, nor excellent speech and wise.
For in comeliness one man is meaner to see than his fellows ; but lo,
On the words of his mouth God putteth a crown of beauty, and so
All gaze upon him with delight as he speaks with a shamefast grace
Unflinching, and he shines over all that are met in the place. [170
And when through the city he walks, as a God they look upon him.
And another is like the Immortals in beauty of face and of limb ;
But around his words no garland of grace hath enwoven its spell.
Even so thou art goodly of shape : God could not mend thee, so
well [to tell.

Hath he wrought : but a weakling thou art of thy wit, it were easy
What, man ! it hath roused the spirit that slept within my breast,
Thine unmannerly speech :—no novice am I in the manhood-test,
As thou dost prate, but I ween I have held my place with the best,
So long as my vigour and strength of mine hands were with me
still. [180

But now with mischance and with pain am I compassed, for many
an ill [sea.

Have I borne amid wars of men, amid waves of the troublesome
Howbeit, in spite of my woes, I will try in the games, if there be
Any strength in mine arm, for thine heart-cutting speech hath en-
kindled me." [away,—

Up then he sprang full height,—he hath cast not his mantle
He laid hold on a ponderous quoit, far huger of mass than they
Wherewith the Phæacians hurled in contest, the sons of the land ;
And he swung it, and round he whirled it, and sped from his mighty
hand. [the earth as it came,

And the great stone hummed through the air, and they crouched to
The Phæacians that looked on there, the people of seafaring fame,
From the rush of the stone ; and it passed over every mark beside,
Forth from his hand flying fast ; and swiftly Athenê hied, [190
And she marked the length of the cast in the shape of a man, and
she cried :

" Stranger, even the blind might grope with his hands, and tell
Thy mark from the rest, for not with the crowd of the others it fell,

But far in front : thou then for this contest be merry of cheer.
There is no Phæacian shall outcast this, nor yet come near."

So spake she ; and gladness awoke in the breast of the toil-tried
For joy of seeing the face of a friend in that strange place : [man,
And lighter of heart he spoke, and in loftier tone he began : 200
" Now, match ye my cast, young men, and I ween I will easily
The quoit thus far yet again, yea, farther still shall it go. [throw
And if any man's spirit is moved to essay any other test,
Let him come, let him try :—ye have sorely provoked the heart in
my breast ! [shun !

I will box, I will wrestle or race,—there is none of your contests I
Save Laodamas, all the Phæacians I challenge ; I fear not one.
But he is mine host—and who with his entertainer would fight ?
Witless in very truth, and nothing worth were the wight
Who would challenge to athlete-strife the man that as guest receives
him [210

In the stranger's land : his folly of all he had gained bereaves him.
But of all the rest there is none I refuse ; I think lightly of none :
But come to the proof, and man to man our strength shall be known.
No weakling am I in the games, even all whereof men know.
Well can I skill to put mine hand to the polished bow : [fight,
Yea, and though many a comrade beside me were ranged for the
And each of them aimed at the foe, yet would I be the first to smite
The man that I would, though he stood in the midst of a throng of
the foe.

Philoctêtès, and he alone, outshone me in craft of the bow,
In the land of Troy, what time we Achæans shot in the war :
But of all the rest of the archers I say I am best by far, 220
Yea, of all such mortals as eat bread now the wide earth o'er.
But I take not upon me to rival the men of the days of yore :
Not as Heraclês was, nor such as Oechalia's hero, am I,
Who were wont with the deathless Gods in archery-craft to vie.
Wherefore for this great Eurytus died, and to hoary age
Never came he in his halls, for Apollo in fierceness of rage
Slew him, because he had challenged the God to the strife of the
bow.

Ay, farther than others can speed the arrow the lance I throw.
Only I fear in the race a Phæacian might haply outstrip. [230
My speed, for in pitiful wise was I beaten and crushed in my ship
By the billows that thronged without respite upon me ; and scanty
ease [knees."

For my body had I, and therefore unstrung is the strength of my
Silenced were all that heard by the hero's lion-tone ;
And none for a time spake word, till Alcinous answered alone :
" Stranger, we take not ill the words that here thou hast spoken,
Forasmuch as we see thou art fain of thy prowess to show some
token,
Being angered because this man hath taunted thee here in our sight

In such fashion as no man would take on him ever thy manhood to slight,

Yea, none whose spirit had learnt to speak words seemly and right. But thou, give heed to my saying, to tell it again some day 240

To another such hero as thou in thine own halls far away,
As thou featest there with thy children around, and thy wife at
Forget not our prowess then, wherein is my people's pride, [thy side :
Which Zeus hath bestowed upon us from the days of our fathers
down.

No mighty boxers are we, neither wrestlers of peerless renown ;
But swift in the footrace we are, and our ships are surpassingly fleet ;
And the banquet to us, and the lute, and the flash of the dancers' feet,

And changes of raiment, and steaming baths, and the couch, are
—Come, ye Phæacian dancers, who all your fellows excel, [sweet.
Make sport for us now, that the stranger to far-away friends may tell, 250

When home he is come, how peerless we are all nations among
In the craft of the sea, in the race, in the dance, and in music and song.

And let some one hie to the palace with speed, to the bard to bring
His lute in the hall that lieth, the lyre of the ringing string."

So spake the godlike sire, and the henchman arose at his call
To bring the carven lyre to the stately palace-hall.
Then did the Nine Men rise, who wont to make it their care
That the games in seemly wise should ever be ordered there ; [ring :
And they smoothed the dancing-ground, and they cleared a fair wide
And the lyre of melodious sound did the henchman thitherward bring. 260

And the minstrel then stepped out to the midst, and a blooming array
Of boys stood round about ; well skilled in the dance were they.
And the glorious measure they beat as they danced, and Odysseus gazed [amazed.

And gazed at the twinkling feet as they glanced, and his soul was
But the minstrel smote the lyre, and began the beautiful song
Of the fair-crowned Queen of Desire, and of Arès the War-god strong, [Flame,

How they wantoned in secret embrace in the halls of the Lord of
When Arès by gifts found grace with the Goddess, and wrought foul shame

On the couch of Hephæstus the King : but to him the Sun-god hied
Swiftly, the tidings to bring of the folly his eye had espied. 270
And Hephæstus' spirit burned when his shame was told unto him ;
But into his smithy he turned, dark-brooding a purpose grim.

And the anvil he set on the block, and he hammered him chain after chain [remain.

That none should break or unlock, but should helplessly fettered
And ever, the while he wrought, his heart was a fire within.

And thereafter the chamber he sought, and the bed they had marred
by their sin.

And the fetters all over the bed he wreathed round post and beam,
And the mazy toils overhead from the ceiling adown let stream
As the webs of a spider fine, that they could not so much as be seen,
No, not by an eye divine: they were craftily fashioned, I ween. 280
But when he had wrought all so, and the snare had been set for guilt,
He made as though he would go unto Lemnos, beautiful-built,
Which is dearest to him by far of the lands on the earth that are.

And Arês with reins of gold kept no blind watch that day,
And glad was he to behold the Craft-god going away.
To the hall of the Lord of the fire, Hephæstus, swiftly he sped,
Filled with a burning desire for her of the bright-crowned head.
From the presence of Kronos' son, her sire, was she newly come in;
And her limbs on a couch had she cast; but into the palace he
passed,

And he clasped her hand in his own, and thus did Arês begin: 290
"Aphroditê, my sweet, come away to the rapture of love's embrace,
For Hephæstus thy lord no longer abideth anigh this place;
He is gone unto Lemnos' isle, to the Sintians' barbarous race."

And the Goddess was well content, and sweet the tempting seemed;
And so to the couch they went, and lay; and suddenly streamed
Around them the coils that Hephæstus' toils so cunningly wove,
And they helpless remained, howsoever they strained, one limb to
move; [on every hand.

For they knew not, nor dreamed of the snare, till it hemmed them
And the Halt-foot One was there, by their side did the God-smith
stand, 300

For that back had he turned him, ere he had won unto Lemnos-land;
For the God of the Sun had spied for him, and the tidings had told.
And into his palace he hied, indignant and angry-souled;
Then swift to the porch came out, by his fierceness of wrath over-
borne:

Far rang his terrible shout fulfilled of passion and scorn:
"O Zeus Allfather! blest Gods everliving!—come every one!
Come look on a sight for laughter,—on deeds unendurable done!
How the daughter of Zeus, Aphroditê, dishonoureth me alway
Who am lame, but she loves this murderous Arês; loves him, I say,
For that comely he is and shapely-footed: but I—I am halt!
I was born so!—my parents for this—none other but they—are in
fault. 310

And I would that they never had borne me a mark for flouting and
scorn! [delight;
See—see!—they have gone to the bed, my bed, for their wanton
And there are they sleeping; and I, I am anguishèd at heart at the
sight.

Ah but I doubt they will scantily desire any longer to lie, [joy!
Though never so loving: full soon will they weary of slumber and

But my craft, but my fetters shall prison them taken, they shall not
flee, [to me,

Till such time as her father give back all the sum of the bride-gifts
Even all that I gave him, to win me his daughter, the shameless-
faced,

Fair to behold, but her lust is unbridled, her heart is unchaste ! ”

Then gathered the Gods to the hall upon brazen foundations that
stood :

Came Poseidon, that compasseth all the earth, and the Giver of
good ; 320

And the King of the Silver Bow, far-darting Apollo, came :

But never a Goddess would go from her dwelling, for very shame.

And into the porch they pressed, to the sight that was there re-
vealed ;

And up from the Gods ever-blest the unquenchable laughter pealed,
When they looked on the magical labour, Hephæstus’ cunning de-
vice ; [wise :

And one turned unto his neighbour, and spake to him after this
“ Never do ill deeds thrive, but the slow overtaketh the fleet,

Even as Arès now is outstripped by Hephæstus’ feet, [330

Caught, though the swiftest he be of the Gods in Olympus that live,
By the sleight of the lame : satisfaction for wrong must he there-
fore give.”

One unto other so they spake as they looked thereupon :

And cried the King of the Bow unto Hermès, the Thunderer’s son :
“ Hermès, thou giver of good unto men, and their heaven-sent guide,
Wouldst thou be contented thus in fetters constrained to abide,
Lying the while on a couch by Aphroditè’s side ? ”

Then unto him the Helper, the Slayer of Argus, replied :

“ O King, far-darter Apollo, I would that this might be !
Though thrice so many fetters were endlessly coiled round me,
And of all the Goddesses I, and of all the Gods, were beholden, 340
Yet were I fain to lie by Aphroditè the golden.”

So he spake ; loud laughter the while arose from the high Gods
there.

Yet deigned not Poseidon to smile, and ever he made his prayer
That the Wonder-worker would set the War-god free from the net ;
And Poseidon said, as the winged words sped with entreaty fair :
“ Release him, I promise that Arès shall pay whatsoever is right,
Even as thou requirest, in all the Immortals’ sight.”

Answered the Halt-foot God, as Poseidon’s petition he heard :

“ Ask me not this, O thou whose waters the earth engird.
Pledges of worthless ones,—right worthless to hold they be ! 350
How in the midst of the Gods ever-living should I bind thee,
If Arès take flight, and alike from the fetters and mulct go free ? ”

Then unto him did the Shaker of Earth, Poseidon, say :

“ Hephæstus, if so it should hap that Arès, fleeing away,
Should escape from the fine, that mulct will I, even I, lay down.”

Made answer the Halt-foot God, the Lord of craft-renown :
 " It may nowise be, nor is meet, that I should say thee nay."

Thus as he spake, the strength of Hephæstus parted the chain ;
 And they, delivered at length from the net's irresistible strain,
 Sprang up ; and the War-god fast unto Thrace at the ends of the
 earth 360

Sped ; and to Cyprus passed the Lady of laughter and mirth,
 Where in Paphos her high place stands, and her altar with incense
 steaming : [gleaming

And there by the Graces' hands was she bathed, and with oil bright-
 Perfumed,—'tis the chrism divine that on Gods everlasting doth
 shine,— [seeming.

And was clothed in attire whence spells of desire breathed, wondrous—

So rang the glorious lay, and filled with delight in hearing
 Was the hero Odysseus, and they of the land, the folk sea-faring.
 Then Laodamas rose at the hest of the King to dance ; at his side
 Rose Halius, for none of the rest of the dancers with these twain
 vied. [370

And a beautiful ball they brought, bright-dyed with the purple gay,
 By the cunning of Polybus wrought for the dancers' marvellous play,
 Which the one, back-bending, flung to the clouds that o'ershadowing
 hung,

And lightly upspringing to meet it the other arose with a bound,
 And he caught it, or ever his feet had lighted again on the ground.
 And featly and gracefully all was performed in the Dance of the
 Ball,

As still to the sky it went soaring on high, and was caught in the fall.
 And they danced with a fairy pressure of feet on the bounteous
 ground,

To and fro ever changing in measure, and ranging in mazes around.
 And all the rest of the boys kept time to the light feet bounding,
 That a beautiful rhythmical noise of fingers and feet was sounding.

And then to Alcinous godlike Odysseus in wonder spoke : [380
 " Lord King Alcinous, high-renowned among all earth-folk, [boast ;
 These dancers of thine thou saidst were unmatched, so ran thy
 And behold, it hath all come true, and I gaze, in amazement lost."

He spake, and Alcinous' breast was filled with exultation ;
 And straightway he cried to the rest, the lords of the oar-loving
 nation :

" Harken to me, Phæacian princes and chieftains of might :
 The stranger, methinks, hath an excellent wit that discerneth aright.
 Come then, let us give to him gifts, as is meet ; for kings of renown
 Twelve, and the thirteenth I, bear sway by upland and town. 390
 Therefore a beautiful tunic, a mantle washen fair,

And a talent of precious gold let each to the stranger bear ;
 And all together with speed let us bring them before him, that so
 The stranger, with these in his hands, glad-hearted to supper may
 go.

And let Euryalus with words and a present content the mind
Of our guest, seeing that which he spake was nowise seemly nor
kind."

So did he speak, and they commended the words of the king ;
And each of them sent away a henchman the gifts to bring.
And then to Alcinous Euryalus made answer and spoke :
" Lord King Alcinous, high-renowned among all earth-folk, 400
I will gladden the stranger's heart, according to thy command ;
This sword will I give unto him, all brass is the blade of the brand,
And of silver the hilt, and an ivory scabbard, in rich device
Fresh-carven, wraps it about : he shall find it a gift of price."

As he spake, in his hands he placed the silver-garnished sword ;
And the costly gift he graced with a kindly-spoken word :
" Hail, father stranger : if aught hath been spoken of hard or
unkind,

May it quickly be scattered and snatched away by the gusty wind.
And to thee may the high Gods grant to behold thy friends, and to
go [410
To thy land, who afar from thy friends art suffering woe upon woe."

Then unto him Odysseus the subtle of wit replied :
" Hail thou too, friend : all good from the Gods unto thee betide.
And never in days to come may regret be known by thee
For the sword thou hast given, with speech that hath gladdened the
heart of me."

Then over his shoulders he flung the falcion silver-wrought.
And the sun in the red west hung, and sank ; and the gifts were
brought.

And the lordly henchmen bare them away to the palace-door,
And the sons of Alcinous there received the costly store,
And the gifts exceeding fair to the queen their mother they bore.
Then Alcinous' sacred might to the palace-halls led on. 420

There each sat down on the height of a starry-gleaming throne.
And thereafter the words of his mouth to Arête the king addressed :
" O lady mine, bring forth, I pray thee, thy goodliest chest,
And lay in the same a mantle bright and a tunic-vest.
And set on the fire a caldron, and heat the water therein ;
That so, when our guest hath bathed, and the goodly store hath
seen

Of the gifts the Phæacians hither have brought for him this day,
He may have delight of the banquet, and list to the minstrel's
lay.

And this beautiful chalice of mine will I furthermore add to his
store,— [430

'Tis of gold,—that so he may think upon me in his halls evermore,
When to Zeus and the rest of the Gods drink-offerings thence he
shall pour."

So spake that stately sire, and Arête gave instant command
To her maidens that over the fire a mighty tripod should stand :

So they brought the tripod with haste, and over the hearthstone
 placed, [coiling
 And with water they filled, and beneath they kindled the brands, and
 About it the flames 'gan wreath, as arose the steam of the boiling.
 And Arêtê the while for her guest from out of her chamber bore
 A great and a goodly chest, and therein did she lay the store
 Of gold and radiant vest, the gifts the Phæacians gave ;
 And she added to all the rest a tunic and mantle brave. 440
 And then to the hero she spake, and she uttered the wingèd words :
 " Thyself now look to the lid, and speedily lash it with cords,
 That none on the way may be able to rob thee, when thou in sleep
 Sweetly art lying, as flieth the black ship over the deep."

So when he had heard that saying, Odysseus the man toil-tried,
 The broad lid over it laying, passed round it the ropes, and plied
 Full swiftly, and wrought, as Circê had taught, knots cunningly
 tied. dight ;
 And thereafter the stewardess bade him approach to the bath ready
 And his soul was exceeding glad as the laver steamed in his sight.
 For no such solace had come unto him, on the way as he fared, 450
 From the day that he left the home of Calypso the beautiful-
 haired ;—

But with her had he had such care as tendeth a God evermore :—
 So the handmaids bathed him there, and with oil they anointed him
 o'er ;

And a mantle about him they cast, and a gay-hued tunic and fine ;
 And out of the bath he passed to go to the banquet of wine.
 Lo, radiant there in her pride of beauty and heaven-lent bloom,
 Nausicaa stood beside the door of the banqueting-room.
 And she saw, and with admiration her heart within her was stirred ;
 And to him the maiden Phæacian addressed the light-winged word :
 " Hail, stranger : and when in thine home in the days to come thou
 shalt be, 460

Forget me not, who owest the price of thy life unto me."

Answered Odysseus the subtle of wit with a kindly word :
 " Nausicaa, child of the king of the sea, the great-souled lord,
 May Zeus, the husband of Hêrê, who thunders on high in his
 power,
 Not grant me to win to mine home, nor to see that restfullest hour,
 If I fail through the rest of my life in prayer and thanksgiving to
 thee

As a Goddess ; for thou, sweet maiden, hast given my life unto me."

So spake he, and passed to his seat by the king at the festal
 board. [and poured.
 And now were they sharing the meat, and the wine had they mingled
 And the henchman then drew nigh, and he led the minstrel
 sweet, 470

Who of all the people was high accounted, on to a seat,
 In the midst of the banqueters all, and beside was a pillar tall.

And Odysseus carved from the chine,—yet leaving the more part
over,—

The flesh of a white-tusked swine, which the rich fat-fold did cover :
And the hero summoned the henchman, and gave to his hands the
“Henchman, bear to Demodocus this, and so let him eat, [meat :
And say that I greet him well, though sore heart-stricken of ill.

For amongst all men that dwell upon earth the minstrel still
Hath honour and reverence high, for the Muse by paths of song
Hath led him forth, and ever she loveth the minstrel-throng.” 480

So he spake, and the henchman bare to the bard, as the hero
bade ;

And he took that courtesy-share, and his spirit within him was glad.
So they to the things that before them were lying their hands ex-
tended,

Till the craving for meat was o'er, and desire for drinking was

Unto Demodocus spake the hero Odysseus then : [ended.

“Minstrel, the praise of song shall be thine beyond all men.
Or the Muse, the child of Zeus, or Apollo, instructed thee ;
For thou singest the sorrowful fate of the Greeks right marvellously,
Even all that they suffered and wrought, and the manifold troubles
they bare, [was there. 490

As though thou hadst seen it thyself, or hadst heard it of one that
But come now, change thy theme, and sing of the great horse
made

Of wood, that Epeius fashioned with Pallas Athênê's aid,
Which the craft of Odysseus caused to be drawn to the citadel's
height

Filled with the men that laid strong Ilium low in a night.
Now if thou canst worthily sing me the story of this as it fell,
Unto all men that be upon earth thy song-renown will I tell,
How that the favour of heaven hath made thee therein to excel.”

And the minstrel smote the lyre, and the song burst forth again,
For now did a God inspire the rush of the glorious strain.

And he sang how the Greeks set fire to the huts of their camp on
the plain, 500

And boarded the galleys, and went from Troyland sailing away,
Save only the heroes that pent in the cavern of pine-wood lay
Round famous Odysseus, right in the midst of a Trojan throng ;
For up to their citadel's height had the Trojans haled it along ;
And there it stood, and still the folk talked waveringly

As around it they sat, and the will of the crowd was divided in
three, [brown,

Or to burst through its timbers with shock of relentless twybill
Or out to the brow of the rock to drag it, and hurl it adown,

Or to spare it, a gift that should plead with the high Gods, turning
aside [should betide. 510

Their wrath ; and by this same rede was it doomed that the end
For fated to perish they were when the city embraced with her wall

The mountain of beams that bare the Argive heroes all,
With terrible gifts for Troy in their hands, even slaughter and
doom. [gloom

And he sang how they rose to destroy the city, and out of the
Of the cavernous ambush they poured ; and he sang of the startled
night [pight,

When hither and thither the sword went wasting the town high-
While Odysseus a swift way trod to Dèiphobus' mansion, grim

As Arês, and strong as a god Menelaus followed with him :

And there in a terrible fight they closed, and the minstrel told
How they conquered at last through the might of Athênê the
mighty-souled. 520

So sang that bard of renown, but Odysseus could only languish
For the days no more, and adown his cheeks rolled tears of anguish.

And even as a woman falls on her dear-loved lord, stricken down

As he fought in front of the walls for his folk and his native town,

And battled to hold at bay from his dearest the pitiless day ;

And she, beholding him gasping, and now at the point to die,

Shrieks, falling upon him and clasping with loud and bitter cry ;

But the blows of the spear-staves rain on her back from the merci-
less foe : [woe ;

She is dragged with a captive train to the slave's lot, labour and
And her cheeks grow haggard and wan with her pitiful, pitiful
grief ;— 530

So the piteous tear-drops ran from the eyes of the woe-worn chief.

And the harp rang on, and none saw the tears of his anguish
roll,—

But the king took knowledge alone of the grief of the hero's soul,

And he heard him heavily moan, for that close to his side sat he ;

And straightway he spoke to the oar-loving folk, the sons of the sea :

“ Lords of Phæacian folk, and captains all, give ear !

Now let Demodocus hush the lyre's voice echoing clear ;

For this that he singeth doth not please all that sit at the wine ;

For since we began the feast, and arose the song divine,

From moaning and piteous crying the stranger hath had no rest. 540

Surely, I wot, some sorrow he hath that haunteth his breast.

Then hush the lyre and the song, that we all may rejoice as one,

Guest, and guest-receivers, for seemlier so were it done.

For all for the stranger's sake hath this day's work been wrought,

The galley prepared, and the gifts that to him were lovingly brought.

Even as a brother the stranger and suppliant is to the wight

Whose soul hath attained to know, though never so little, the right.

Now therefore, the thing that I ask of thee, hide it not from me, I
pray,

With crafty intent ; the truth it were more for thine honour to say.

Tell us the name that thy father and mother bestowed upon thee,
[550

That they of thy city know, and the dwellers around it that be.

For in sooth there is no man found whom the folk by no name call,
 Be he high-born or lowly, if once the wight hath been born at all :
 But even in the hour of his birth have his parents given him a name.
 And tell us thy land and thy city, and who be the folk of the same ;
 To the end that our ships may thitherward bear thee, finding the
 path

By wit of their own : no pilot the galley Phæacian hath,
 No rudder that guideth all galleys beside in the way they should go ;
 But the thoughts and the purpose of men of themselves do our
 ships know ;

And all men's cities and fruitful fields do they know full well. 560
 And exceeding swiftly they pass o'er the fathomless-deep sea-swell
 In veiling mist and cloud overmantled : no fear have they
 To meet with any mischance, nor e'er to be cast away.

Yet I mind me now of a tale that I heard from my father's lips,
 How he said that Poseidon, angered against us because of our ships,
 Which bear all comers unscathed to the haven wherein they would
 be,

Would smite a galley of ours one day in the misty sea,
 As it homeward returned from some such errand across the deep,
 And a monstrous hill should enshroud our town with its measureless
 heap.

So ran the greybeard's tale ; but this shall the God fulfil 570
 Or leave undone, as best it shall seem to his sovereign will.

But come, tell this unto me, and without fail answer me all :
 By what far lands hast thou roamed, what cities of stately wall ?
 And the men, were they savage and brutal, a justice-scorning kind,
 Or lovers of strangers, and bearing the fear of the Gods in mind ?
 And whence was the grief of thine heart, and the tears from thine
 eyes that rolled,

When the tale of the Danaans' fate and of Ilium's fall was told ?
 For the high Gods ordered it so, and the threads of their doom
 span they, [lay.

That for those that are yet for to come there should be some glory-
 Was a valiant kinsman of thine stricken down before Troy's wall,
 Spouse of thy daughter or sire of thy wife ?—for dearest of all [580
 Are these unto men, next those of the selfsame blood that be.

Or was it perchance a friend that was dear to the heart of thee,
 Noble and brave ? For precious, and good to possess as a brother
 Is a friend, when hearts are wise and loyal each to the other."

BOOK IX.

Odysseus telleth the tale of his wanderings. Of the
Cyclops-giant and his blinding.

THEN unto him subtle-witted Odysseus in answer spoke :
“ Lord King Alcinous, high-renowned among all earth-folk,
Ah 'tis a glorious thing to list to the high lay ringing
From the lips of a bard till it sounds as the Gods out of heaven
were singing.

For I ween there is naught more sweet that a man may attain unto
Than when there is mirth and delight the whole glad nation through,
And the banqueters sitting arow in the halls of the palace hear
The march of magnificent song, and the tables are loaded with cheer,
And the eyes of the red wine gleam as the cupbearer draweth it out
Of the mazer, and filleth the cups of the guests as he bears it about. io
Sweetest and fairest of all such a lot to my soul doth appear.

But thine heart hath been moved to enquire of my cares and my
sorrow and pain, [again.

To the end I may mourn yet more, and groan with remembrance
Of which of them all shall I tell thee the first ?—of which speak
last ?

So many the Heaven-abiders have dealt me in days overpast.

First will I tell you my name, that ye also may know it, and then,
When I 'scape from the pitiless day and the net for my life that was
cast, [men.

I shall still be your guest, though my dwelling be far from Phæacian

Odysseus the son of Laertes am I, whom all men know [go. 20

For my crafty wiles, and the fame of me high as the heavens doth
In Ithaca dwell I, the beautiful isle, and a mountain therein,
Néritus, waveth his forests, far over the waters seen ;

And around it is many another isle, to each other anigh,
Dulichium, Samê, Zakyntus clothed with her mantle green.

But this, the utmost of all, low down in the sea doth lie
To westward,—the rest look away to the sun and the dayspring
Rugged enow, but of heroes a kindly nursing-mother. [sky :—

Ah, sweeter than that dear land shall I verily find none other !
 Yea, Calypso the Goddess divine long time by her side kept me
 In her hollow caves, being fain that her husband there I would be. 30
 So too did the cunning Circê essay in her fairy-house
 In Ææa to keep me, longing to have me for aye her spouse.
 But never they overpersuaded mine heart to consent to their will,
 For sweeter than all things else are country and parents still.
 Though a man in a strange land dwell 'neath a palace's stately dome,
 Afar from his parents, ever he dreameth of home, sweet home.
 But come, if thou wilt, of this weariful home-quest now will I tell,
 Which Zeus laid upon me at setting forth, when Troy-town fell.

With the breeze that from Ilium carried us nigh the Ciconians
 we drew,

And Ismarus town we harried, the men thereof we slew ; 40
 And their wives, and a booty fair that we gathered from every side
 Out of the town, did we share together, and fairly divide.
 And then did I counsel my men to flee swift-footed away ;
 Fools, fools were they all, for then they would nowise hear nor obey :
 But there by the strand would they stay to quaff long draughts of
 wine,

And many a sheep to slay, with trail-foot wreath-horned kine.
 But the folk that had scattered in flight went crying the gathering-
 cry [anigh,
 Through the dim land all through the night unto others that dwelt
 Which were more in number than they, and mightier men in the
 fray,

The inland folk, who know full well with the battle-steed 50
 To close in the fight with the foe, and on foot to meet them at need.
 And countless as leaves they appeared, or as flowers in the spring
 that blow, [woe ;

At the break of the day, and our weird was to suffer full many a
 For the hand of Zeus that day was against us ill-starred men.
 And they set the fight in array on the shore by the swift ships then :
 And hurling on either side with the brazen lances we fought.
 And all through the morning-tide, and still while the day waxed hot,
 Ever we kept them at bay, for all that so many they were,
 Till the sun was sloping his ray to the hour for unyoking the steer ;
 But the foe had the mastery then, and they turned the Achæans to
 flight : 60

And of each ship six good men returned not again that night ;
 But the rest of us fled from destruction dread and the death ready-
 dight.

Then stood we out to sea, full dismally leaving the coast,
 Glad from the death to flee, yet grieving for comrades lost.
 But or ever the keels ran out to the offing, we turned to the shore,
 Thrice raising the farewell shout to those we should see nevermore,
 Whom death in the plain did meet, with Ciconian men as they
 fought.

But the Gatherer of clouds on the fleet the might of the north-wind
 brought ;
 And it waxed till a hurricane roared, and masses of cloud on-driven
 O'er the land and the sea were poured, and night rushed down from
 the heaven. 70
 And the prows, plunging heavily under the surge, drove : then each
 sail
 Banged, cracked and ripped asunder by stress of the terrible gale :
 But we furled, and below we stowed them, in dread death's clutch
 to feel ; [each keel.
 And with might and main we rowed to the shore, till we beached
 Two nights without respite there, two days were we forced to remain,
 Eating our hearts with care, and with grief, and with weariness-
 pain. [shedding,
 But at last, when the third morn shook bright tresses abroad, dew-
 We hoisted the mast, and we took the white sails up, and spreading
 Our canvas forth, sat still, with the wind and the helmsman to steer.
 And now without more ill had I come to my fatherland dear, 80
 But in rounding Maleia there caught us a cross-sea-current, and
 shifted [drifted.
 Our course, and the north-wind fought us, and wide of Cythera we
 Thence nine days did we sweep before winds that were hungry to
 Over the fishful deep, till we came on the tenth sad day [slay
 To the Lotos-eaters' land, on the flower-like dainty who feed.
 There went we forth on the strand, and water we drew for our
 need : [hull.
 And a meal each crew soon spread on the shore by the swift ship's
 But when we had eaten the bread, and had drunk of the wine to the
 full,
 Then I sent of my comrades away to the folk of the land, to find
 What manner of men were they, of the earth's corn-eating kind. 90
 And I chose two men for the quest, and with them a herald I sent ;
 And leaving with speed the rest, to the Lotos-eaters they went.
 And the Lotos-eaters thought no mischief against those three ;
 Only unto them they brought of the fruit of the Lotos-tree :
 And whoe'er of the fruit honey-sweet once tasted, desired never
 more
 Again to bring word to the fleet, or return to his fatherland-shore.
 But with Lotos-eaters for aye did the poor wretch earnestly yearn
 Plucking the Lotos to stay, and forgetting his home-return.
 But I dragged them down to the sea, looking backward, and bit-
 terly crying, [100
 Till we had the infatuate three bound, under the ship-thwarts lying.
 And fearing that others yet might eat, and their country forget,
 The rest of my trusty band I bade no longer to stay,
 But to hurry down to the strand, and embark, and to hasten away.
 So they gat them each to his ship, and they sat them down to the
 stroke,

And the sea with the orderly dip of the blades into hoar foam broke.

So we left that perilous strand, heart-anguished sailing away ;
And we came to the Cyclopes' land : overweening and lawless be
they.

For the morrow they take no care, but they look to the Gods, and so
Never they drive the share, neither plant that the herb may grow :
But neither with sowing of seed nor ploughing come all things
there ;

They have barley and corn at their need, and the vines untended
bear

Heavy-clustered the flame-faced wine, swelled out by the rains of
And they have no laws divine, neither folk-motes wont they to use :
And fellowship love they not, but high on the mountains they live,
Each in his hollow grot, and to children and wives they give
Wild law, and they mind not for joys of their kind, neither reckon
when they grieve.

Off the place where the high coast trends in, making a goodly
A lone waste island extends, not anigh, neither far away,
Wooded, and wild goats stray through the copses, a countless host,
For no man cometh to fray them there on the lonely coast.
No huntsmen set foot on the shore, such as they that the wood-game
rouse

And drive with labour sore high up to the mountain-brows.
No herds in its pastures graze, no shares through the furrows go,
But ever from olden days it hath none to plough it or sow ;
But the wild goats bleat, and their restless feet roam high, roam low.
For not by the Cyclopes' strand do the red-cheeked galleys ride :
No shipwrights cunning of hand amongst them are found, to pro-
Galleys with swinging oars, at the giants' pleasure to go
Unto cities on far-off shores, as other men wont to do,
When for fellowship's sake far journeys they take o'er the sea to
and fro.

Yea too, of such men that isle had been made into tilth-land fair ;
For the place hath a fruitful soil, all things in their season to bear :
Yea, in it are meadows hard by the shores of the hoary sea,
Well-watered, with deep rich sward : undecaying the vines would
be.

Full smooth for the plough is the ground, rich harvests ye thence
Ever as years come round, for fat is the soil and deep.

And the haven,—no need that on land the hawsers be fast secured,
Nor that anchors sleep on the sand, for the ship needeth not to be
moored ;

But ye beach the galley, and still shall she safely there remain
Till such time as the mariners will, and the fair breeze bloweth
again.

And right at the haven's head from a cave doth a fountain flow
Bright-flashing adown its bed, and around it the poplars grow.
So we sailed in there forthright, and a God was our guide, I ween,

Through the folds of the black dark night, for nothing might there
be seen ;

For now did a thick mist lie all round the ships as they sailed,
Neither shone the moon from the sky, but with clouds was the
face of her veiled.

And none of us all with his eyes the island ahead of us spied,
Nor marked long rollers arise with the landward sweep of the tide,
Till—a shock, and a rasping sound,—and the galleys were high on
the beach.

And so, when the ships were aground, we furled the sails of each, 150
And down from the black hulls stept, and along the shore we lay ;
And heavily there we slept, and awaited the coming of day.

When the Rosy-fingered, the Dawn, from her mist-hung couch did
arise, [ing eyes ;

We wandered by woodland and lawn through the island with wonder—
And the Daughters of that Cloud-king who tosseth the Aegis on
high

Roused for our banqueting the goats on the mountains that lie.

And straight from the ships took we curved bows and javelins good,
And we parted our band in three, and we followed the chase
through the wood. [there :

And abundance of wildwood meat did the good Gods send us
Twelve were the ships of my fleet, and they all had an equal share ;
Nine goats each had for a prey, and myself had ten for my prize. [160
And so through the livelong day, till the sun sank out of the skies,
Sat we feasting upon sweet wine and on meats untold ;
For the wine was not yet gone that was stowed in the black ship's
hold,

Because we had borne away good store in the earth-jars brown
With the rest of the spoil, on the day that we sacked the Ciconians'
town.

And then did we cast our eyes to the Cyclopes' land lying near,
And we saw smoke-wreaths, men's cries and bleating of flocks did
we hear.

So the sun gave place in the skies for the wings of the night to arise,
And there we slept where the ripples crept to the murmuring
shore, 170

Till rosy-fingered the sweet Dawn lingered mid mists no more.

Then I gathered my men together, and spake, in the midst as I
'Tarry ye here awhile, my trusty companions good : [stood :

But I will go with my ship and only my crew with me
Unto yonder coast, and find what manner of men they be,
Whether savage and brutal of mood, a justice-scorning kind,
Or lovers of strangers, and bearing the fear of the Gods in mind.'

So down to the galley I hied, and my mates did I there command
To climb the black ship's side, and to cast her off from the strand.
So they entered up into the ship, and they sat them down to the
stroke, 180

And the sea with the orderly dip of the blades into hoar foam broke.
 Full soon passing over the wave we came to the unknown land ;
 And there we espied a cave close down by the white sea-strand,
 With laurels climbing the steep sides up to the roof's dim height :
 There numberless goats and sheep were wont to be housed for the
 night.

And around was a lofty wall of stones in the earth deep-pressed,
 Encompassed with pine-trees tall, and with oak-trees stately-tressed.
 There a giant was wont to sleep : through the days he wandered
 alone

Tending the flocks of his sheep ; and fellowship had he with none ;
 For his dwelling still would he sunder from all, and he recked not
 of right 190

In his heart, and his frame was a wonder, gigantic and grim to the
 sight,

Not like to the sons of men, but seeming a forest-clad crest
 Of high bleak mountains, when it is chasm-rent from the rest.

Then did I straitly command the rest of my comrades to bide
 Guarding the ship on the strand by the lazy wash of the tide.
 But I chose me the best of my band, twelve good men valiant and
 true,

And I went, with a skin in my hand full of sweet wine purple of hue,
 Which Maron, Evanthes' son, the priest of Apollo's shrine
 That high over Ismarus shone to win it protection divine, [200
 Had given me for sparing his life along with his child and his wife ;—
 Out of reverence we did it, because that he dwelt mid the grove of
 trees

Where the fane of Apollo was ;—and he gave great gifts, even
 these—

Seven talents by weight of gold he gave, well-purified,
 And a bowl of costly mould, all silver : yea, and beside
 The choicest of all his wine into twelve great jars did he pour,
 Untempered, a drink divine : none knew of the precious store ;
 Not a serving-man nor a maid was found in his house that knew,
 But he and his wife, and the staid old stewardess, tried and true.
 And, in drinking the honey-sweet treasure of wine with its rose-
 flushed hue,

Ever they poured one measure, but twenty of water thereto, 210
 And sweetly arose from the bowl the breath of a perfume divine :
 Then would it vex thy soul to abstain from the rich rare wine.
 Thereof a great goat-skin, and food in a wallet we brought,
 For now, mine heart within, on a sudden arose the thought
 That the dweller in that lone spot was gigantic and clothed with
 might,

And savage, and caring not for justice at all, nor for right.
 So we came to the cavern with speed, but therein we beheld not its
 master,

For gone was he thence to feed his goats on the mountain-pasture.

So we entered, and then at our ease did we gaze upon all things there. [were 220

There were rush-crates heavy with cheese, and crowded pens there
Of lambs and of kids, each kind full heedfully kept asunder,
For the firstlings here were confined, and the later-born penned
yonder ;

And yonder the new-yeaned lay ; and every pail and pan [man.
And bowl was o'erflowing with whey, milked full by the salvage

Then did my shipmates come around me, and earnestly pray
That we first should bear off some of the cheeses, and hasten away,
And thereafter should drive from the pens the kidlings and lambs,
and bestow [go.

The flock in the galley, and thence o'er the ridges of brine should
But I would not heed them or hear,—O, but this had been well for
us then !— [his grace : 230

But would look on the cave-man's face, and receive guest-gifts of
Ah me, he was not to appear for a sight of joy to my men !

So we lighted a fire, and we gave to the Gods the portion befitting.
And we ate of the cheese in the cave ; and there we awaited him
sitting, [bare,

Till he came thither, driving his sheep, and wood on his shoulder he
A huge, a measureless heap, his supper therewith to prepare.

And he cast it down therewithin, with a crash and a rattling shock ;
And in terror we fled to screen ourselves in a nook of the rock.

And his fat beasts into the cave, the monstrous mountain-cleft,
Even all that he milked, he drave ; but the males outside he left,
The rams and the he-goats all, without the high court-wall. 240

And a rough-hewn rock did he lift, and over the cave's mouth drew,
A mass for a giant to shift, not broad wains twenty and two,
Each straining with stout wheels four, such a weight from its place
could drag,

As blackened the cavern door at his touch, that rugged crag.

And he sat him down, and drew from each of the bleating dams
The milk in order due, and put under them kidlings or lambs.

And he curdled half of the white milk, filling the bowls straightway ;
And he gathered and pressed it tight, and in baskets of rush did he
But he set aside to stand in pails the uncurdled half, [lay.

Ready prepared to his hand when he supped, to take and to quaff. 250
But when he had sped through his toil, and accomplished his labours
thus,

He kindled the great wood-pile, and espied us, and questioned us :
' Who are ye, strangers, and whence have ye sailed o'er the ways of
the sea ?

Are ye such as fare upon traffic, or wander ye recklessly
Over the waves, as they that go roving, a pirate band,
Risking their lives, bringing mischief to men of an alien land ? '

So he spake, but our very soul was shaken with ghastly affright
At his voice's thunder-roll, and his monstrous bulk and height :

Yet I gathered my strength, and made answer at length, as well as
I might : [260

‘Achæans are we, that from Troy as we came were beaten away
By baffling winds from our course o’er the gulfs of the sea to stray ;
Home were we bound, but were driven by ways that we knew not of,
And pathless paths : so was it decreed by the Gods above.

And the folk of the son of Atreus, of King Agamemnon, we are :
Of all men that live under heaven his glory is highest far ;
So great is the town he hath ta’en, so many he slew in the war.
But now, behold, unto thee be we come, at thy knees do we bow,
If perchance thou wouldst give us the guest-due, or haply bestow
on us now

Some gift beside of thy bounty, since gifts are the stranger’s right.
Respect thou the Gods, for thy suppliants are we, O chiefest in might.
Avenger of strangers and suppliants Zeus evermore hath been, [270
The Guest-ward ; still by the sacred stranger he walketh unseen.’

Straight in his ruthless mood did the giant answer, and say :
‘Stranger, thou sure art a fool, or hast come from far away,
Who biddest me fear the Gods, or for dread of their anger spare.
Naught for thine Ægis-bearer, for Zeus, do the Cyclopes care,
Nor yet for the blessed Gods : good sooth, far stronger are we.
Not to escape his hate would I show compassion to thee,
Nor yet to thy fellows, except as mine own soul prompted me.
But tell me, where have ye left your well-wrought ship on the
strand ? 280

On the uttermost part of the coast, or anywhere nigh at hand ? ’

So tempting he spake, but I knew too much to be trapped by his
And I made reply thereto with ready-dissembling guile : [wile :
‘My ship Earth-shaker Poseidon shattered mid breaker-surge,
Hurling it on to the rocks at your land’s extremest verge, [sea ;
Having brought it anigh to a headland : the wind swept in from the
And with these men only from sheer destruction scarce could I flee.’

But he, the pitiless-hearted, answered me nothing then,
But all at once upstart, and shot forth his hands at my men,
And together laid hold on twain, and dashed them against the
ground 290

Like whelps : down gushed the brain, and bespattered the rock-
floor round.

And limb from limb did he shred them, and horribly supped thereon
Like a mountain-lion dread, and he left of the flesh of them none,
Of the inwards and flesh of our dead, and the marrow with the bone.
And wailing and shuddering we raised hands unto Zeus in prayer,
That horrible deed to see ; but our soul was filled with despair.
And when with the flesh and the blood of our friends that maw was
filled,

Over his cursed food milk-draughts he swallowed and swilled.
Then stretched through the midst of the sheep in the cavern he
sprawled asleep.

Then thought I, my heart within, full softly to steal more nigh, 300
 And swiftly to draw the keen true blade from beside my thigh,
 And to feel with mine hand for the part where the fence of his ribs
 left bare [there :
 The liver, and strike to his heart ; but a new thought stayed me
 For then had we perished by swift doom pent in the dark alone ;
 For in vain had we tried to shift from the high door that huge stone
 Which we saw the monster lift so lightly, and set thereon.
 So there we groaned and wept, and awaited the blessed morn.
 When up from her mist-couch leapt the Rosy-fingered, the Dawn,
 He kindled the fire, and he drew the milk from the bleating dams,
 All as in order due, and put under them kidlings or lambs. 310
 But when he had hastened through his work, and his toil was o'er,
 Snatching at other two, he devoured them, even as before.
 And after his feast he drave his goodly flocks from his den,
 And the huge door-stone of the cave full lightly he moved, and then
 Set it again, as ye move a quiver-lid, into its place :
 And with whistling loud he drove his flock to the mountains to
 And I was left in there, dark-brooding a purpose grim, [graze.
 If Athênê would grant my prayer, to take some vengeance on him.
 And there came a device to me then, as I mused upon every way.
 Along by the side of a pen the club of the Cyclops lay, 320
 Green wood of the olive, which he had cut and had laid to dry,
 To make him a staff, and we made guess, as we saw it lie,
 That such were the size of the mast of a galley of twenty oars
 That beareth a freight full fast where the sea-gulf welters and
 roars,
 So huge was its ponderous strength, so long, so thick, did it seem.
 And now some fathom's length did I cut from the mighty beam.
 And then to my comrades I gave it, the bark thereof to strip :
 And with care did they scrape it and shave it, the while I pointed
 the tip.
 And thereafter I bare it with speed to the fire, and baked it dry,
 And hid it away with good heed in the litter that chanced to lie 330
 Thick-scattered by stall and pen all over the gloomy grot.
 Then I commanded my men to choose of themselves by lot
 Those that should dare, as I, to uplift on high the pole,
 And to twist it around in his eye when sweet sleep over him stole.
 And the lot fell even on those whom I would have wished for my
 need,
 Four, and myself I chose for the fifth to adventure the deed.
 Then came at the eventide that man-beast, herding his flock ;
 And he drave them all inside the cavern of rifted rock :
 And now he left none of them all in the garth of the deep court-
 wall ;
 Something perchance he feared, or a God the difference made. 340
 Then the vast stone door he upreared, and over the cave's mouth
 laid.

And he sat him down, and he drew from each of the bleating dams
Their milk in order due, and put under them kidlings or lambs.

But when he had hastened through his work, and his toil was o'er,
Snatching at other two he devoured them, even as before.

Then I filled with the generous wine a rough-hewn wooden cup,

And drew near with the drink divine, and spake, as I lifted it up :

' Take, Cyclops, drink of the wine, who hast eaten of man's flesh
thus,

And so shalt thou know what marvellous drink we carried with us
In our ship ; a drink offering was this unto thee, if pitying me 350
Thou wouldst send me home : but desperate madness hath seized on
thee.

Out on thee ! who shall be found that again will come to thy land
Of all men else ? for lawless are these the deeds of thine hand.'

So I spake, and he took it and quaffed, and he revelled with hor-
rible glee

As he swallowed the precious draught, and he asked it again of me :

' Give me again with speed, and straightway tell me thy name,

And so will I give thee a guest-gift, and thou shalt have joy of the
same.

For in sooth in the Cyclopes' land doth the wine abundantly flow
From clusters heavily-drooping, and Zeus' rain maketh them grow :
But this—this is even a rill of ambrosia and nectar, I trow !' 360

So spake he, and I once more held forth to his lips the draught :
Three times at his bidding I bore, and thrice in his folly he quaffed.
And now had the fumes of the wine overclouded the Cyclops'
brain ;

And straight with a deep design I spoke, but in gentlest strain :

' Thou hast asked, O Cyclops, my name of renown : I will tell it
to thee, [mised to me.

And then shalt thou give me the guest-gift, the which thou hast pro-
Noman am I, and Noman the name by the which they call

Thy guest, even father and mother, and merry companions all.'

So did I speak, and answer he made full pitilessly :

' Noman after his fellows the last to be eaten shall be ; 370

The others before him ; and this is the guest-gift from me unto thee.'

Then the huge bulk reeled and stooped, and backward with heavy
fall

Dropped, and the thick neck drooped aslant, and the conquerer of all,
Sleep, laid hold on his frame : wine-spirits from his throat did leap,
And gobbets of man's flesh came, as he belched in his drunken
sleep.

Then, then did I thrust beneath a heap of the embers the pole,

Till it glowed in the fire-god's breath ; and with brave words cheered
the soul

Of each, that none might shirk his part in the desperate work.

But when the stake into flame would have burst in a little more,

Green wood as it was, and became of a fiery glow all o'er, 380

Then I snatched it out of the fire, and drew nigh, and my comrades stood

Around, and their courage rose higher, some God unto us being good. Then, taking the stake, my men—right sharp was the fierce red tip!—

Plunged it into his eye : I held it above, and so Whirled it around, as when one boreth the beam of a ship With a drill, and his fellows ply the long strap to and fro, As on either hand below him they stand, and it swiftly doth go. Even so through his eye we crushed and we whirled the fire-tipped wood ;

And around the hot stake gushed a fountain of hissing blood : And singed by the fiery glow were eyelid and eyebrow around 390 The burning ball, and below at the roots was a crackling sound. And as when in a smithy a man dippeth axe or adze he hath made Loud hissing into the pan of water to temper the blade,— For of such-like handicraft good shall the edge of the iron be found,—

So, as we plunged in the wood, was the eyeball hissing around. And he yelled, and the cavern rang in thunder to that wild roar ; And backward in terror we sprang, as with frantic hands he tore The torturing stake from his eye, and dripping in crimson spray We saw the blood-gouts fly, as he dashed it madly away.

And the man-beast's hideous yell pealed out through the startled night 400

To his fellows that round him dwell by windy ravine and height ; And they, as they heard his shout, came trooping from every side ; And, standing the cavern about, they asked of him wherefore he cried : [thus

‘ Polyphemus, what is thy grief that hath moved thee to clamour Through the hush of the balmy night, and from sleep to awaken us ? Can it be that a mortal man is driving thy cattle away, Or hath suddenly set upon thee by craft or by violence to slay ? ’

Then from the cavern rolled the mighty giant's cry :

‘ Friends, Noman slays me by cunning, and nowise by force do I die ! ’ [him then : 410

Sped from their lips the light-winged words, as they answered ‘ If indeed it be no man that falls on thee here in thy lonely den, We cannot escape the disease that Zeus the almighty doth bring. But thou, put up thy prayer to thy father, Poseidon the king. ’

So speaking, they turned them to leave him ; and laughed mine heart for glee [man save me.

To think that my name should deceive them, the cunning of no But the Cyclops, with many a groan agonizing in anguish sore, Groped with his hands, and the stone he thrust from the cavern door : [wide

And he sat in the entrance to keep it, and spread his hands out To catch whosoe'er with his sheep should essay to escape outside.

Such witless folly, I wis, he imputed to me in his breast ! 420
 But I straightway took counsel that this should all fall out for the
 best,

Devising how we should fly from destruction, I and my men.
 And many a web wove I of cunning and stratagem then, [stood.
 As a man for his life might well do, for 'neath death's shadow we
 And so, as I mused, it befell that this thing seemed to be good :—
 The rams of his flock were tall, and with fleeces heavy and full,
 Broad-backed and comely withal, and with wealth of violet wool.
 So these together I led, and with twisted withes did I bind—
 They were strewn for the Cyclops' bed, that monster of impious
 mind :—

Three by three were they tied, and the midmost bore below 430
 A man, and on either side did the others shielding him go.
 So was it, that three sheep bore a man : but the flower of them all
 Was a ram, great-girthed far more than his fellows, stately and tall.
 So I grasped his back, and below that shaggiest belly uprolled,
 With mine hands laid hold on his vast deep fleece, and I gript it
 fast ;

And I held on, shrouded so, untiringly, patient-souled.
 So a weary vigil we kept, and we sighed for the lingering morn.

When up from her mist-couch leapt the Rosy-fingered, the Dawn,
 Forth to the free fresh air the rams rushed, pasture-bound ;
 But the ewes still bleated there to be milked, the pens around, 440
 For their udders were heavy and strained ; but their lord, still agony-
 pained, [their wool,

Laid his hands on the backs of the sheep as they passed him, feeling
 Thinking that so he would keep the pass ; but he knew not,—fool !—
 That under a woolly breast to a foe free passage he gave.

Then, after all the rest, came his ram to the door of the cave,
 Oppressed by his fleece's mass and the weight of the wisdom in me :
 Over him did the giant pass his hands, saying dolefully :

' Bonny ram, how is this, that thou comest to-day to the cavern-
 door [fore.

Last of the sheep?—thou hast not been wont to be laggard be-
 But first before all to graze on the soft meadow-grass dost thou go, 450
 Stark-striding, and first art thou wont to come to the river's flow,
 And first to the folding dost long to return at the evenfall.

But to-day, bonny ram, how is this?—thou art even the last of all !
 Dost thou grieve for the eye of thy lord, whom a villain hath now
 made blind,

Even he and his pitiful mates, with wine overcoming my mind ?

Noman—ah, but not yet is he out of destruction's reach !

But if thou couldst know my thoughts, but if thou wert gifted with
 speech,

Thou wouldst tell to me—wouldst thou not?—where he slinketh
 away from my might ;

Oh then should his brains fly spattered about to left and to right

O'er the ground, as I dashed him adown, and mine heart, now misery-fraught, [for-naught.' 460

Should rest from the evils that Noman hath dealt me,—the good-
Then he sent it from gloom into day: I was clear of the cursed place!

And when we had gotten away from the cavern a little space,
From under the ram did I leap, and then I released each mate;
And we hastily drove his sheep, long-shanked and goodly and great,
Ever heading them heedfully, till we had them down to the shore.
Right glad were the others to see their companions appear once
more [were dead.

Who had 'scaped from death, but they set up a wail for those that
But I would not suffer it yet, and frowning and shaking my head
I forbade them to mourn and weep, but with speed in the galley to
stow 470

The throng of the fair-fleeced sheep, and over the brine to go.
So they entered up into the ship with speed, and sat down to the
stroke,

And the sea with the orderly dip of the blades into hoar foam broke.
And when we were so far off that the shout of a man could be
heard,

Then I 'gan at the giant to scoff with many a gibing word: [vour
'Cyclops! no weakling was he whose men thou didst think to de-
In thy dungeon-cave, secure in thine own high-handed power!

Ah, but thine evil deeds were to find thee out at the last!
Wretch, who of guests in thine house couldest make thy fiendish
repast! 480

Despiser of Zeus and the Gods—lo, this is their vengeance-hour!
Then the rage in the monster's breast was redoubled by mad
despair, [air:

And a towering mountain-crest he rent, and he hurled through the
And hurtling above us the rock just ahead of the galley fell;
And the sea at the thunderous shock leapt, rolling a mountain swell.
And the sweep of the waves high-surging carried us toward the
land,

Backward, still backward urging the ship to the very strand.
O then with desperate grip I seized the pole, and I flew
To the stern, and I thrust the ship clear off and commanded my
crew, [flight

Not speaking, but nodding my head, to strain with the oars in
From the fate of our comrades dead; and they rowed with their
uttermost might. 490

But when, as we swept o'er the main, we were twice so far away,
I addressed me to speak again a farewell to the giant; but they,
Pleading in gentle strain, one after another 'gan say:

'Desperate man! why wilt thou provoke unto wrath yet more
A savage, who hurled at our galley but now, and drave her ashore
Well nigh, and we verily thought even then we were all dead men:

And if he had heard but the sound of thy voice, or a word from thee then,

He had hurled with a rugged rock, and had crushed at a single blow Our heads and the planks of the galley, so far is he mighty to throw.' [burned; 500

Yet could they not overpersuade the wrath that within me And angry in spirit I said, as again to the giant I turned :

' Cyclops, if ever a mortal man should ask thee to tell Of thy blinded eye, and how so shameful a thing befell, Say that Odysseus destroyer of cities put out thine eye, Odysseus, the son of Laertes, whose home doth in Ithaca lie.'

So did I speak, and he yelled, and answer he made with his word : ' Lo ! now cometh back unto me a prophecy long ago heard ! Here there abode a man, and goodly and great was he, Telemus, Eurymus' son, in the soothsayer's mystery Unmatched, and to hoary hairs mid our nation he prophesied. 510 And he told me that this same thing unto me should hereafter betide,

That I should be robbed of my sight, made blind by Odysseus' hand. But ever I looked to behold some hero stately and grand Hitherward coming, a warrior clothed with a giant's might : And now, behold, 'tis a dwarfish, a worthless, a weakling wight, That hath stolen the sight of mine eye when with wine he had mastered me !

Come hither, Odysseus, that so I may give guest-dues unto thee, And may pray the Earth-shaker to grant that safe may thy home-track be,

Seeing that I am Poseidon's son, and my father is he ; And he, if it please him, shall heal me, for he can do it, but none Beside him, of Gods on high, or of mortals under the sun.' [520

So he spake, but an answering scoff at the baffled giant I hurled : ' O that I could but send thee down to the underworld, Bereft of thy soul and thy life, and that this my power were as sure As the Earth-shaker's impotence ever that eye of thine to cure !'

Then in his great despair he sent up to Poseidon his cry, Stretching his hand in prayer to the star-bestudded sky : ' Dark-haired Earth-shaker Poseidon ! O hearken to me in my need, If I am in truth thy son, and if thou art my father indeed ! May Odysseus the sacker of cities return to his home nevermore, 530 Even the son of Laertes, whose home is on Ithaca's shore. But and if 'tis his weird to behold his friends, and again to stand In his palace stately-built, on the shore of his native land, Late, and in evil case, all comrades lost, may he come, In an alien ship, to find woes waiting him there in his home !'

So in his prayer he spake, and the Earth-shaker heard his cry. Then a rock once more did he take, far huger, and heaved it on high, And he swung it, and measureless might did he put to it, speeding its flight.

Through the air with his vengeance it hissed, and aft of the dark-
prowed ship

Fell, and but barely it missed of reaching the rudder's tip. 540

At the down-coming rush of the stone the sea dashed high with a
roar ;

But the vast swell swept us on, and it drave to the further shore.

And when we were come to the isle where the well-benched galleys
lay, [there

Lo, ranged on the shore they were, and our fellows around them
Were sitting and mourning the while, expecting us day by day.

So there safe back came we, and we ran up the ship on the strand,

And out on the surf of the sea we stepped, and went up to the land.

And the sheep of the Cyclops then did we land, and divided them

So that to each of my men an equal share should fall. [all

But ere they divided the sheep, that ram did my warrior-band 550

Set by, and they bade me keep for my own : so there on the strand

Unto Zeus the cloudrack-clad did I offer him, burning the thighs.

But the ruler of all things had not respect to my sacrifice,

Ah no, but was purposing then that the well-benched galleys all,

And my brave true-hearted men, should into destruction fall.

So through the livelong day, till the sun's light faded away,

Sat we feasting upon sweet wine and on meats untold.

And at last, when the sun was gone, and the gloom gathered, fold
upon fold,

We lay and slept where the ripples crept to the murmuring shore,

Till the Rosy-fingered, the sweet Dawn, lingered mid mists no
more. 560

Then I arose, and cried to my shipmates, and gave command

To climb each black ship's side, and to cast her loose from the
strand. [stroke,

So they entered up into the ship, and they sat them down to the

And the sea with the orderly dip of the blades into hoar foam broke.

Thence stood we out to sea, heavy-hearted leaving the coast,

Glad from the death to flee, yet grieving for comrades lost.

BOOK X.

How Circe by her spells changed the hero's men into swine,
and how he delibered them.

TO Aeolia next did we come as we fared on over the sea ;
Unto Aeolus' island-home : full dear to the Gods was he.
A floating island it was, with a wall upon every side
Built of impregnable brass, and the cliff sprang sheer from the tide.
Twelve children the King had there, all born unto him in his hall ;
Six daughters exceeding fair, and six sons comely and tall.
So these in marriage he joined, and sister he wedded to brother.
And aye at the banquet reclined by their well-loved father and
mother, [store ;
They feast ; and there lieth before them of dainties a measureless
And the moaning sough of the wind ever echoes the vast halls o'er. [10
So the days pass on, and at night by their beautiful brides do they
lie,
Sleeping on carpets bright, upon fashioned couches high.
So we came to their city fair, girt round with its flame-like wall ;
And his guest for a whole month there did he make me, and asked
me of all,
Of Ilium, and of the fleet, and the heroes' home-return ;
And I told him of all, as was meet, whereof he was fain to learn.
And thereafter I prayed to depart, and that I to mine home might
be sent ;
So then with ungrudging heart good help for my journey he lent ;
For he stripped of his mighty skin an ox nine seasons old,
And the blustering winds therein bound fast, in the hide's dark
fold. 20
For him hath Kronion made the warder of winds, and still
At his command are they stayed from blowing, are roused at his
will. [them
So he fastened them down in the ship, with a shining cord around
Of silver, that none should slip the leash of the chain that bound them.

Did we not send thee away in peace, that thou mightest depart
To the land of thy fathers, thine home, and whereso thy will was
to go ?'

So did they speak, and to them I made answer, heavy of heart :
' My comrades were false to me : they, and cruel slumber, betrayed
me.

But heal ye my sorrow, my friends : ye only are able to aid me.'

In pitying silence they heard my sorrowful supplication :

But their father, with anger stirred, flamed forth in his indignation :
' Avaunt from the island with haste, thou vilest of all that live !

It were impious for me to speed on his homeward way, or to give
Any help to a wretch that hath kindled the hate of the Dwellers in
Bliss. [this !'

Avaunt ! 'tis the hate of the Gods everlasting hath brought thee to
So he drave me away from his door, and with sighing deep I de-
parted. [hearted ;

Thence stood we out from the shore, and we sailed on, sorrowful-
And our spirits grew weary and sore with vainly toiling in rowing,
For now there appeared no more any help to our homeward-going.
Howbeit for days twice three did we toil through the day and the
night : 80

On the seventh slow rose from the sea the city of Lamus in sight,
Læstrygonia with gates built wide, where shepherd to neatherd
calls,

This, folding at eventide, that, leaving with morning the walls.

There might a sleepless wight for his toils gain twofold pay,

Yea, a double wage should he earn, tending oxen and sheep in turn,
For the goings-forth of the night are hard by the breaking of day.

And a goodly haven we found, and about it the tall cliffs stand,

As a great wall running around, unbroken on either hand.

And huge bluffs towering high rise, guarding the mouth of the bay,
Facing each other and nigh, for strait is the entrance-way. 90

Then into the haven did all my crews their galleys steer,

And within the engirdling wall were they moored, to each other
anear.

For no vast swell from the deep rolled darkening into the bay :

Not a wave to the shore did sweep, but within it a white calm lay.

But I, I only, refrained from bringing my galley inside :

At the outermost edge we remained : to a rock were the hawsers
tied. [then :

• And I climbed to a rough crag's height, and I gazed on the landscape
But there nowhere appeared in sight any labours of oxen or men,
But afar there appeared to our view, from the earth upspringing, a
smoke.

Then did I send of my crew to enquire what manner of folk 100
Were they in the land that lived, and the fruits of the earth
received.

And I chose two men for the quest, and with them a herald I sent ;

So they landed, and inland they pressed by a highway, whereon
wains went

Drawing the timber down from the mountains into the town.

And a maiden they met at the spring in front of the gates, drawing
water,

The Læstrygonian king Antiphates' stately daughter :

And the princess was newly come down to Artacia's fountain fair,—

For thence the folk of the town were wont their water to bear ;—

And the men drew near, and spoke to the maiden, and prayed her
to say

Who was the king of the folk, and who dwelt under his sway. 110

And with haste she showed them the place of the palace, and en-
tering in

They beheld with startled amaze the form of a giant queen,

Huge as a mountain-peak, and they shuddered at that dread thing.

But she rushed to the folkmote to seek her husband, the man-
eating king.

Swiftly, with fearful intent, rushed on them the monster grim,

And he seized upon one, and he rent him, and horribly feasted on
him.

But back to the ships with feet terror-winged did the others fly ;

And shouting along the street he pursued, and came at his cry

The Læstrygonian throng by thousands from every hand,

Not like unto men, but strong and huge as a giant band. 120

And down from the rampart of rock great stones at the galleys they
dashed ;

And ever with shock upon shock the timbers shivered and crashed,

With shrieks of perishing men, and with rending of plank and keel :

Like fishes they speared them then, and they won them a horrible

But while our companions died that deep sea haven within, [meal.

Swiftly I snatched from beside my thigh my falchion keen,

And with lightning-sweep of the blade cut adrift the ship dark-
prowed ; [shouted aloud,

And my trembling companions I bade, as I cheered them, and

With might and main at the oar to tug, from the mischief to flee ;

And in terror of death they tore the blades through the foam of the
sea, 130

Till with joy from the free blue wave we beheld where the cliffs'
dark frown [went down.

Gloomed over the crimsoned grave where the rest of the fleet

Thence sailed we away o'er the sea, sad-hearted leaving the coast,

Glad from the death to flee, but grieved for companions lost.

And we came to an island fair, *Ææa*, wherein was the dwelling

Of *Circê* with beautiful hair and the voice of sweetness excelling,

Dread Goddess of many a spell, even such as *Æêtês* the fell ;

For they both were born of the Sun that gladdeneth men with his
beam,

And their mother was *Persê*, one of the daughters of Ocean-stream.

And in silence we came to the place, and in gloom dropped down to the land, 140

To a haven ample of space, led sure by a heavenly hand.
And we landed, and lying there two days, two nights did remain,
Eating our hearts with care and with grief, and with weariness-pain.
But at last, when the third morn shook bright tresses abroad, dew-streaming,

My lance in mine hand I took, and my keen sword brazen-gleaming ;
And with speed from the ship went I, and I climbed a high place then,

If fields I perchance might espy, or might hear the voices of men.
And I gazed from the rocky height around me on every hand ;
And a smoke appeared to my sight springing up from the broad-
wayed land, [stood ;— 150

From the heart of a dark oak-wood,—where the palace of Circê
And looking thereon I wondered, and doubted within my breast
To go and to know why broke through the forest that flame-flushed
smoke :

And thus thereupon as I pondered, it seemed unto me to be best
First to return to my men on the shore where the swift ship lay,
And to give them to eat, and then to send explorers away. [sea,
But as thither my steps I bent, and drew nigh to the ship and the
Through the woodland alone as I went, some God had pity on me,
And a stag tall-antlered sent, so that right in my path came he.
From a glade of his forest-home that stately beast had come
To the river to drink, for the might of the sun did scorchingly
shine ; 160

And even as he turned to depart, I hurled at the noble hart,
And the brazen spear leapt right through the midst of his back at
the spine ;

And down in the dust he fell as shivered his dying bell. [wound,
And I set on the quarry my foot, and I drew the lance from the
And there by an oak's gnarled root I laid it along on the ground.
Then creepers and withies strong I pulled, and I deftly plied,
And a rope a fathom long, well-twisted from side to side,
Plaiting, together I bound the feet of the monstrous prey ;
And I bare it, hanging around my neck, to the galley away,
Propping my steps with my spear, for I could not in any wise 170
By a hand on my shoulder bear it, so huge was the wood-beast's
size. [near,

And I cast it down on the sand by the ship, and to each drawing
I roused my disconsolate band, and I spake to them words of cheer :
' Ho friends ! we are not to go yet to the gloom of the netherworld
home, [come.

Whatsoever our anguish of heart, till the day of our fate shall be
Up, for so long as meat and drink in the galley doth lie, [die.'
We will comfort our hearts with food, and by famine we will not
So did I speak, and my crew right speedily hearkened to me ;

And the cloaks from their heads they withdrew by the shore of the
 harvestless sea, [180
 And there did they gaze on the stag with amaze, for gigantic was he.
 But when they had all of them tasted delight in beholding the beast,
 They washed their hands, and they hasted, and made them a goodly
 feast.

So through the livelong day, till the sun's light faded away,
 Sat we feasting upon sweet wine and on meats untold. [upon fold,
 And at last, when the sun was gone, and the gloom gathered, fold
 We lay and slept where the ripples crept to the murmuring shore,
 Till the Rosy-fingered, the sweet Dawn, lingered mid mists no more.
 Then I gathered my comrades, and unto them all my speech I
 addressed :

' Shipmates, give ear unto me, albeit by troubles oppressed :
 Lo, friends, we cannot tell here where lieth the east or the west, 190
 Neither where sinketh the sun beneath the earth to his rest,
 Nor where he returneth again : but let us consider and see
 If counsel be any to help us ; and scarcely, I trow, shall there be.
 For I saw erewhile, as I climbed a rugged rock to behold,
 How that this is an island with limitless waters around it rolled.
 It is low in the sea ; and I saw with mine eyes, as gazing I stood,
 A certain smoke that arose from the heart of a dark oak-wood.'

So did I speak, and thereat their heart was broken with grief ;
 For they called to remembrance that which the Læstrygonian
 chief [again ; 200
 Had done, and with shuddering fears they thought of the Cyclops
 And bitter and loud were their cries as the hot tears ran from their
 eyes ; [vain.

Yet profit came none of their tears, and their mourning was all in
 And thereafter I numbered my crew, and divided in twain my
 band ;

And appointed them captains two, the rest of the men to command.
 And the troop that myself led not to Eurylochus' hand I gave ;
 And a brazen morion we took, and the pebbles within it we shook,
 And forth of it leapt the lot of Eurylochus godlike and brave.

So he turned him to go on the quest with the twenty and two of his
 band ; [strand.

Weeping they went, and the rest tarried mourning behind on the
 Mid the glens of the forest lone the palace of Circê they found 210
 Builded of polished stone in a fair clear parcel of ground ;

And with wondering awe great wolves they saw and lions around,
 Bewitched by the Goddess, when with her drugs she had wrought
 a charm. [harm ;

Yet these rushed not on the men, neither looked as meaning them
 But they came with their long tails swaying caressingly, fawning
 and playing. [receive,

And even as around their lord throng hounds as they fawn to
 What time he comes from the board, the morsels he useth to give,

So fawning the wolves appeared, and the lions of mighty claw
 Around those men, and they feared as the terrible monsters they saw.
 And they stood in the porch of the dome of the Goddess of beautiful
 hair ; 220

And a voice was singing within, clear-ringing with melody rare :
 It was Circê that sang at the loom high-set and unearthly fair,
 Dainty and fine, as the labours divine of Goddesses are.
 And them Polites addressed, a captain of prowess in war,
 Who was nearer than all the rest and dearer to me by far :
 ' Friends, there is some one within at the loom that paceth about,
 And the whole hall echoes again as the beautiful voice rings out :
 Goddess or woman is she : let us hail her from hence with a
 shout.'

So did he counsel, and they uplifted their voices and cried ;
 And she came from her loom away, and she flung the bright doors
 wide. 230
 And she bade my companions enter, and they in their ignorance
 went ;

But Eurylochus would not venture, foreboding her guileful intent.
 And she brought them to where in a chamber did thrones and
 couches shine :

And barley and cheese and amber honey in Pramnian wine [food,
 She mingled and stirred ; but she strewed her drugs of woe in the
 That they might no more remember their land far over the brine.
 And she gave the bowl to my band, and they drank ; in a moment
 then [to a pen.

She smote the men with her wand, and she drove them—swine—
 And the heads and the voices they had of swine, and the form all
 o'er

With loathliest bristles clad, but their mind remained as before. 240
 Weeping and shrieking there were they penned, and Circê cast
 Before them, to mock their despair, the acorn and cornel and mast
 For their eating, even the meat that earth-wallowing swine ever
 eat.

But Eurylochus back to the fleet black galley is come flying fast,
 Bringing word of the bitter fate of his friends unto us that remain ;
 Yet he had no power to relate the story, however fain,
 Heart-stricken with anguish great : in his eyes was a very rain
 Of streaming tears, and in mourning his heart was whelmed and
 in woe. [horror to know ;

And we marvelled, and questioned him, burning the cause of his
 Till, in tones that were one long wail for the lost, he told his tale : 250
 ' We passed, as thou bad'st, Odysseus, midst twilight of oak-trees
 round,

Till amidst of the forest glens a goodly palace we found,
 Fair builded of polished stones, in a wide clear parcel of ground.
 There was some one singing with voice clear-ringing, the loom as
 she plied,

Either Goddess or woman: my fellows uplifted their voices and cried;
And swiftly she came forth thence, and the shining doors flung wide.

And she bade them enter, and all together in ignorance went;
But alone I tarried without, foreboding her guileful intent.

And they vanished all: not one came forth to the light again, [260
Though long time sitting without did I eagerly watching remain.'

O'er my shoulder my brazen brand, long, silver-studded, I flung,
And I took my bow in my hand, and my quiver behind me I hung;
And I straightway commanded the man to lead me the selfsame way:

But he clasped my knees, and began in a passion of terror to pray,
And he wailed, and the hot tears ran from his eyes, and thus did he say:

'O drag me not thither perforce, but suffer me here to remain;
For I know thou wilt never come back, nor bring one of our comrades again.

But let us with these that be left full hastily get us away,
For still, it may be, there is time to escape from the evil day.'

Then to the cowering craven in sadness and scorn I replied: 270

'Even so, Eurylochus, thou in thy place shalt safely abide,
Eating and drinking beside the hollow ships and the sea;

And I will go thither alone, for a mighty constraint is on me.'

So departing from him and the rest, I went up to the unknown land:

And through solemn glens I pressed, and now was I nigh at hand
To the palace of Circê, the dread Witch-goddess of beautiful hair.
And Hermes of Golden Rod there met me, the way as I trod

On to the palace that led, and the form of a youth he bare
Whose life is lovely and young, with the first soft down on his chin;
To mine hand with his fingers he clung, and thus did he gently begin: [280

'Whither, O hapless one, through the mountains alone dost thou wander, [yonder

Through places thou knowest not? Thy companions are prisoned
In Circê's palace as swine: in a dungeon-sty are they now:

And art thou come hither to free them? I tell thee, not even thou
Shalt return from the place, but thou shalt be made as one of the rest.

Nay, I will deliver thee out of the perils of this thy quest.

Lo this strong counter-charm:—thou take it, and hie thee away

To her palace: this shall avert from thine head the evil day.

All Circê's deadly spells unto thee will I now declare: [there. 290
She will mix thee a summer-draught, and drugs will she cast in
But she shall not have power to bewitch thee so, for the counter-charm

That I shall give unto thee shall defend thy body from harm.

Now as soon as the Goddess shall smite thy body with that long wand,

Out of the scabbard snatch thy falchion with sudden hand,
And rush upon Circê as though thou wouldst slay her; but she will crouch

Before thee in startled affright, and will bid thee unto her couch.

Then thou shalt deny her not, nor reject the Goddess's bed,

To the end she may free thy companions, and thou mayest homeward be sped :

But command her to swear the oath of the Blessèd, the oath of
That she will not imagine against thee some strange dark mischief
and dread, [power, 300

Nor quell thee and turn to the shape of a brute in thy fenceless hour.'

So speaking, the magic root the Slayer of Argus bestowed,—

In the earth it grew at his foot,—and the nature thereof he showed.

Black was the root of the same, but the flower thereof milk-white,

Which Môly the high Gods name : hard is it for mortal might

To rend the root from the ground ; but the Gods' power knoweth
no bound.

Thus having spoken to me, to Olympus was Hermes gone

O'er the forest-clad isle of the sea ; and I to the palace went on,

While the dark thoughts surged in my breast like the sea in its
wild unrest. [310

And I stood at the gate of the hall of the Goddess of beautiful hair,

And I lifted my voice to call, and the Goddess heard me there ;

And she came from within, and wide she flung the shining door,

Crying ' Come ! ' ; and I passed inside, but my heart with trouble
was sore.

So she led me in, and she brought to a silver-studded seat

Beautiful, richly-wrought, with a footstool beneath for my feet.

And she mingled a draught for me in a goblet of massy gold,

And her drugs therein cast she, that sorceress evil-souled.

And I took the cup in my hand, and I drank, but the charm worked
not : [dark thought :

And she smote me then with her wand, and she uttered her heart's

' Depart thou now to the sty, with the rest of thy friends to lie.' 320

But swift at the word I snatched my sword from beside my thigh,

And I rushed, as in act to wreak the vengeance of death on her there.

But she with a loud wild shriek ran under the sword made bare,

And with white arms flung round my knees she clung with eager
prayer : [they dwell ?

' Who art thou, and whence ? and thy wife and thy parents, where do

I marvel that drinking of this thou wast not bewitched by the spell ;

For before thee hath no man's strength availed these drugs to outlast,

When once he hath drunk, when once through the fence of his teeth
they have passed.

Strangely thou hast in thy bosom a soul no charms can bind !

Can it be that thou art Odysseus, the hero of shiftful mind. 330

Whose coming was ever foretold me by Hermes of Golden Wand,
What time in the swift black ship thou shouldst sail from the Troad-
land?

Come, put up thy sword in his sheath, and let us ascend my bed,
And from loving embrace let trustful faith in each other be bred.'

So did she speak, but in answer to her did I warily say :
' O Circê, how canst thou bid me to turn from mine anger away,
Who hast made my companions swine in thine halls this very day,
And, having me here, dost only with treacherous heart bid me
To enter thy chamber within, and ascend thy couch with thee,
That weaponless, man no more, I may be but thy sorcery's thrall ?
I will not consent, not I, to approach to thy couch at all, [340
Unless thou be willing, Goddess, to take the oath of power
That thou wilt not imagine my hurt in any unguarded hour.'

So did I speak, and she swore the oath inviolate, dread.
But after the swearing was o'er, and all was done as I said,
I ascended, in peril no more, unto Circê's lovely bed.
And Circê's maidens the while full swiftly their labours plied,
Four handmaids that wont to toil in the halls of the palace wide ;
And these are the daughters of fountains, and sprung from the
forest-tree,

And of rivers that roll from the mountains their sacred streams to
the sea. 350

And their several tasks they sped : the one upon thrones 'gan strow
Rugs dyed of the purple-red, with fair smooth cloths below ;
And the second before each throne set tables of silver white,
And the bread she arrayed thereon in baskets golden-bright ;
And the third in a silver bowl 'gan mingle the wine flame-faced,
That as honey is sweet to the soul, and goblets of gold she placed ;
And the fourth from the fountain-stream brought sparkling water
and poured

Into a tripod, and steam arose as the red flames roared.
When the water bubbled for heat in the caldron brightly-flashing,
She tempered it, making it sweet to the sense and meet for the
washing. 360

In the laver I sat, and the maid from the mighty tripod shed
Warm streams that delightsomely strayed down over my shoulders
and head,

From my limbs all dreamily taking the pain of their toils heart-
breaking :

And when she had bathed me so, and anointed with unguent rare,
About me then did she throw a tunic and mantle fair.
And me from the bath she led to a silver-spangled seat
Cunningly-wrought, rug-spread, with a footstool beneath for my feet.
And the bright spring water was brought by a maiden, and poured
from a ewer

Golden, beautiful-wrought, into laver of silver pure,
To wash withal, and she spread a table of polished sheen 370

Beside me, and served was the bread by the stewardess modest of mien ;

And with meats she covered it o'er, giving freely of all her store.

And she bade me to eat of the fare ; but a cloud was over my soul,
And I sat with my thoughts elsewhere, and I loathed the meat and the bowl.

But when Circê was ware of my mood, and saw that I would not take

Aught of the dainty food, but was sad with a sore heart-ache,

Anigh unto me she stood, and the light-winged words she spake :

' Wherefore, Odysseus, thus as a man that is dumb dost thou sit,
Gnawing thine heart, and wilt not take of the wine and the meat ?
Dost thou bode any treachery yet ?—thou needest not : fear not
thou ;

380

For did I not swear the oath of might unto thee but now ? '

So did she speak, but heavy reply unto her I addressed :

' O Circê, how should a man with a loyal heart in his breast

Endure to sit at the wine, and to taste the banquet's delight

Or ever he rescued his friends, and beheld them again in his sight ?

If with all thine heart thou dost bid me to drink and to eat of thy cheer,

Free them, that I with mine eyes may behold my companions dear.'

So to the Goddess I spake, and forth of the hall she hied ; [wide ;

Her wand in her hand did she take, and the doors of the sty flung

And forth she drove the men made like unto monstrous swine. 390

And she ranged them in front of her then, and she passed along the line.

With an unguent wherein there lay new magic she touched each one,

And as water fleeting away from their limbs were the bristles gone
Which had grown of the drug that before was given by the dread

Spell-queen. [been ;

And lo, they were men once more, and younger than erst they had

And taller of stature were they, and their comeliness goodlier shone.

And they knew me, and round their chief they pressed, to my hands

they clung : [gladness ;

And a passion of tender sadness stole through the heart of their

Weird echoes of joy and grief round the walls of the palace were

flung. [heard ; 400

Yea, the Goddess was pity-stirred, as their laughter and crying she

And thus spake she, drawing nigh unto me with a counselling word :

' O seed of Zeus and Laertes, Odysseus resourceful and wise,

Go now to the shore of the sea, to the place where the galley lies.

First haul up the ship on the land from the deep, of the surf-wash clear,

Then stow ye away in caves your goods and your tackling-gear,

And thereafter come back thyself, and bring thy companions dear.'

So did she speak, and thereto mine heart was fain to obey :

And I hied me away to my crew, on the shore where the swift ship lay.

And there as I came to the sea, I found my companions dear
Lamenting piteously with moan and with gushing tear. 410
And as calves on a lone farm-stead, at the hour when the kine
troop home

On the pasture-grass full-fed, and unto the fold-yard come,
All leap in front of them going to the byre ; in the pens not one
Will tarry, but loudly lowing around their mothers they run ;
So, when after all their fears they looked with their eyes upon me,
They threw themselves on me with tears, and their mood seemed
even to be [market-stead

As though to their land they were come, and their town, and the
In their rugged Ithacan home wherein they were born and bred.
And wailing and weeping the light-winged words spake they unto
me :

‘ To see thee coming again, O hero, as glad are we 420
As though we had won to the fatherland-home in our hearts long-
cherished. [perished.’

Come, tell us concerning the rest of our friends, and how they
So did they speak, but I made answer with words of cheer :

‘ First let us haul up the galley on land, of the surf-line clear,
And bestow our possessions in caverns, with all the galley’s gear.
Then get you up with speed ; we will all together fare
To the palace of Circê, and so shall ye see your companions there
Eating and drinking in peace, for enough they have and to spare.’

Then with speed they began to obey, but only Eurylochus tried
My men from the venture to stay, and thus to the others he cried : 430
‘ O wretches and doomed ! do ye long for your own undoing, that
thus

Ye must needs go down to the Palace of Spells, where all of us
Shall to wolves or to swine or to lions be turned by the witch-wife’s
power

To keep a weariful watch around the enchanted bower ?
Even so did the Cyclops in prison pen them, when into his den
Our companions went, and with them Odysseus, rashest of men ;
For all of his madness it was that they wretchedly perished then.’

So did he speak, but I, in my wrath at the word that he said,
Snatched from beside my thigh my long keen-pointed blade,
And was minded to smite off his head, and to dash it adown on the
ground ; 440

Though my kinsman, his blood had I shed, but the rest of my men
came round,

With soft words, each after other, to turn my purpose away :

‘ Hero divine, we will heed not him, we will leave him to stay
Here, an thou wilt, and to guard the galley beside the sea ;
But lead thou on unto Circê’s hall, we will follow thee.’

So went they up from the strand, nor yet Eurylochus stayed,

But he followed the rest of the band, by my terrible threat dismayed.

Meanwhile the rest of my crew by Circê with kindest care
In the bath were refreshed from their toil, and anointed with
odorous oil,

And soft rich mantles she threw about them, and tunics fair. 450
And when these in the hall we found, glad revel there were they
keeping ;

And so, when the nigh-lost men beheld each other again, [weeping ;
The palace echoed around to the noise of their mourning and
But unto my side came the Goddess, and cried to my fellows then :
' O Zeus and Laertes' seed, Odysseus shiftful at need,
Weep and lament no more, for I know of myself full well
All ye have suffered, the woes on the fish-fraught sea that befell,
And the mischief that foemen have done you on many a hostile
shore.

But come now, eat of my meat, and drink of the wine that I pour,
Till your spirit revive in your breast, and ye all be again stout-
hearted, 460

Even as when at the first from your fatherland-isle ye departed :
But now is your strength dried up, there is no more spirit in you ;
For ye brood on your wanderings sore, their memory ever is new,
And ye have no heart for mirth, such troubles have ye come
through.'

So did the Goddess say, and our spirit consented to hear.
And tarrying day after day in her palace through all that year,
Sat we feasting upon sweet wine and on meats untold.
But after the year was gone, as the round of the seasons rolled,
And the months were born and died, and the long days dreamily
sped,

Then my comrades took me aside, and thus unto me they said : 470
' Dreamer, arouse thee ! bethink thee at last of thy fatherland-
home,

If indeed thou be fated to 'scape from thy perils, and yet to come
To the land of thy fathers again, and thy palace's stately dome.'

So unto me did they pray, and their counsel was good in mine
eyes.

Howbeit through one more day, till the sun sank out of the skies,
Sat we feasting upon sweet wine and on meats untold,
Even till the sun was gone, and the gloom gathered, fold upon fold ;
And they laid them down to sleep in the halls mid the shadows
But I to the high couch went of Circê passing-fair, [deep.
And low at her knees I bent, and the Goddess heard my prayer 480
As I knelt and addressed my humble request to the Spell-queen
' O Circê, I pray thee fulfil the promise thou gavest to me [there :
To send me home, for stirreth my spirit restlessly ;
And my comrades are pining : mine heart is breaking because of
their cry,

For mourning around me they come, whensoever thou art not by.'

So spake I, the Goddess divine made instant reply again :

'O Zeus' and Laertes' seed, Odysseus shiftful at need,

Against your pleasure within mine halls no longer remain :

But ye needs must journey first by another path, till ye come

Unto the palace of Hades and dread Persephoné's home, 490

To enquire of the prophet of Thebes concerning the high Gods'

Teiresias, sightless seer, who hath understanding still ; [will,

Since on him alone of the dead did Persephoné sense bestow

And knowledge of things, for the rest are but shadows that flit to
and fro.' [to break,

But with hearing the words that she said mine heart went nigh

And I wept as I sat on the bed ; no more could my spirit take

Any pleasure in still living on, and beholding the light of the sun :

But I wept and I rolled to and fro in a passion of helpless pain,

Till my heart was awearied of woe, and I answered the Goddess
again : [500

'O Circé, but who for such journey as this shall arise for my guide ?

Unto Hades never hath black ship yet sped over the tide !'

So did I moan, but the Goddess divine forthright replied :

'Zeus' and Laertes' seed, Odysseus, shiftful at need,

Let thy lack of a guide in thy galley in no wise disquiet thy mind,

But set up the mast, and, spreading the white sail out to the wind,

Sit still ; for the breeze of the north shall carry the black ship on,

Till out of the sea and across the Ocean-stream thou be gone.

There is a lone waste beach where the groves of Persephoné lie,

Where the aspens shiver, and fruits of the willow in blossoming
die ;

There beach ye the galley by Ocean-river's deep-eddying flow. 510

But thyself to the drear dark home of Hades shalt onward go.

There into Acheron dash Pyriphlegethon's roaring water,

And the gurgling moan of Cocytus' river, the Styx's daughter.

In the midst of the thunder of meeting rivers a rock doth stand :

Hero, when thither thou comest, be mindful of my command.

A trench shalt thou dig thee, in compass a cubit about, foursquare,

And around it to all the dead shalt thou pour drink-offerings there ;

The first be of honey and milk, sweet wine for the next shall flow,

And the third be of water, white barley-grains over all shalt thou
strow. [vow, 520

Thou shalt kneel to the strengthless heads of the dead with many a

How that when thou art come to thine halls thou wilt offer a barren

Thy best, and withal on the altar treasures of price wilt heap, [cow,

And, besides, to Teiresias only wilt sacrifice a sheep

Utterly black, the chiefest of all on thy hills that have fed. [dead,

But when thou hast ended thy prayers to the tribes of the glorious

Then shalt thou sacrifice a ram and a ewe dead-black, [back,

Turning their heads to the netherworld gloom, but thyself looking

Steadfastly setting thy face to the stream of the river, and then

The spirits shall come in a numberless throng, the ghosts of men.
Then shalt thou straitly command thy companions, that wait at thy
side, 530

To take those sheep, on the edge of the pitiless brass that have died,
And to flay them, and burn them, and pray to the Gods of the world
of the dead,

Unto Hades enthroned in might, and Persephoné's majesty dread.
But thyself shalt draw thy falchion keen from beside thy thigh,
And shalt sit, neither suffer the strengthless heads of the dead to
draw nigh [seer.

To the blood-pool, ere thou hast seen and enquired of the Theban
Straightway to thee, O captain of men, will the prophet appear
To declare thy path and the measures of all thy journey to thee,
Even thine homeward track o'er the face of the fish-fraught sea.'

Then the Child of the Mist awoke, and the Gold-enthronèd shone.
Fair raiment, a tunic and cloak gave Circê to me, and anon [540
In a silvery-shining vest full-flowing, of delicate thread,
The Goddess her body dressed, and her dainty girdlestead
A golden girdle pressed, and a veil streamed down from her head.
And I passed through the palace then, where yet none other had
stirred ; [word :

And I stood over each of my men, and aroused them with gentle
'Dream no more through the flowery fields of the slumber-land,
But let us arise and depart, for Circê hath given command.'

So did I speak, and their heart was minded well to obey.
Even thence did I not depart taking all my comrades away ; 550
For a certain Elpenor there was, our youngest, but little fit
Through the fight unto glory to pass, and scanty withal of his wit,
Who in Circê's palace divine had gone from his comrades aloof,
And had laid him, heavy with wine, for the cool night air on the
roof ; [fro

And by voices and heavy tread of his comrades that moved to and
Startled, he sprang from his bed, but forgot, half-wakened, to go
To the place where the long ladder led to the court in the twilight
below : [bone

But headlong with horror-struck thrill did he fall ; bone started from
In his neck, and he lay quite still,—for the soul unto Hades was
gone.

But the rest of them gathered, and then did I speak in the midst of
my men : 560

'Ye are thinking, belike, to return to your fatherland-home again ;
Nay, but another road, saith Circê, we first must tread,
Even to the mansion of Hades, the home of Persephonê dread,
To enquire of the spirit of Theban Teiresias, seer of the dead.'

At the word of terrible sound their heart was rent with despair ;
And they sat them down on the ground, and they wept, and tore
their hair ; [there.

Yet profit came none of their tears, and their moan was bootless

So bitterly weeping my band went down on their sorrowful way.
But when we were come to the strand and the place where the
 swift ship lay, [570
There by the black hull's side were a ram and a ewe dead-black
Which Circê brought thither and tied, and unseen had departed
Easily 'scaping our ken, for a God goeth to and fro [back,
Unmarked by the eyes of men : an he willeth not, who shall know ?

BOOK XI.

How Odysseus went unto Hades, and spake with the
mighty dead.

NOW the galley lay high on the land, as we left her a year ago :
So we dragged her down the strand to the billows, and
launched her thereon ; [wind,
And we hoisted the mast, and we shook the white sail forth to the
And aboard those sheep we took, and embarked with a sorrowful
mind,

Heart-overclouded with fear, and shedding full many a tear.
And a brave wind sprang up behind, and I felt the dark prow lift
As the sail bellied out with the wind, and I knew it for Circê's gift—
Dread Goddess of voice most sweet and glorious braided hair,—
And when we had fastened the sheet and the rest of the tackling
with care, [guide ; 10

We sat in the ship at our ease, with the wind and the steersman to
And the sail all day with the breeze strained over the rolling tide.

Down in the blood-red surge dipt the sun, and the earth grew dim ;
And the galley had reached earth's verge, the deep-flowing Ocean-
stream.

There dwell the Cimmerian folk in a dreary and sunless town,
Overbrooded by frowning cloud, and swathed in a misty shroud
Which never the sun's shafts broke, wherethrough he hath ne'er
looked down,

Neither when up to the plain star-sown he hath mounted on high,
Nor yet in turning again his wheels to the earth from the sky ;
But the pall of the night broodeth o'er the inhabitants awfully.
There ran we the galley ashore, and the sheep from her hold took
we. [20

And we journeyed along by the sound of the ocean that darkling
rolled,

Till we came to the spot of ground whereof Queen Circê had told.

There in the twilight stood Perimede and Eurylochus by [thigh :
With the sheep, but my falchion good did I draw from beside my

And a trench I dug me, in compass a cubit about, foursquare :
 And around it to all the dead did I pour drink-offerings there.
 The first was of honey and milk, sweet wine for the next did flow,
 And the third was of water ; white barley-grains over all did I
 strow.

Then I knelt to the strengthless heads of the dead with many a vow,
 How that, when I should come to mine halls, I would offer a barren
 cow, 30

My best, and withal on the altar treasures of price would heap,
 And beside, to Teiresias only would sacrifice a sheep
 Utterly black, the chiefest of all on mine hills that fed. [dead,
 So when with prayers and with vows I had knelt to the tribes of the
 Then the throats of the sheep I held o'er the trench, and the blade
 Swiftly across, and welled the black blood thereinto ; [I drew
 And the nethergloom ghosts in shadowy hosts arose to my view.

Brides, sires overburdened with care, youths, tender maidens were
 there, [young and fair :

They whose soft hearts broke under grief's first stroke, and they died,
 And heroes in battle slain, stabbed through with the brazen spear,
 With many a dark blood-stain bedabbling their warrior-gear : [40
 Through the horror of darkness they leapt, or ever I knew, into
 sight ; [to left and to right

And they thronged, and they glided and crept round the blood-pit
 With awful shrieks, and I felt that my cheeks were wan with
 affright.

Then did I straitly command my fellows that waited beside
 To take those sheep, on the edge of the pitiless brass that had died,
 And to flay them, and burn them, and pray to the Gods of the
 world of the dead,

Unto Hades enthroned in night, and Persephoné's majesty dread.
 But myself, having drawn my falchion keen from beside my thigh,
 Sat there, nor suffered the strengthless heads of the dead to draw
 nigh 50

To the blood, till the Theban seer to my questions should make
 reply.

But first to the trench drew nigh Elpenor, our comrade dead,
 For his body did not yet lie at peace in the narrow bed :
 For in Circé's halls unburied we left it and unbewailed, [sailed.
 When on this weird quest we hurried, forbidden to tarry, and
 And when I beheld him, I wept, and my heart with compassion
 was stirred ;

And I lifted my voice, and leapt to my lips the light-winged word :
 ' Elpenor, how hast thou come to the gloom of the world of the
 dead,

Who, swifter than I with the galley, on foot hast hitherward sped ? '

As I spake, loud shrieked the spirit, and answered me piteously :
 ' O Zeus' and Laertes' seed, Odysseus shiftful at need, [60
 The curse of a God, and wine without measure to death brought me.

I had slept in Circé's palace, and did not bethink me to go
To the place where the long ladder led from the roof to the court
below ;

But headlong down did I fall from the roof, bone started from bone
In my neck ; and my soul from the body adown unto Hades was
gone. now,—

But now I beseech thee by those left behind, that are not here
By thy wife, by the hands that sustained thee when helpless and
little wast thou, [alone,—

By thy son Telemachus, whom thou didst leave in thy palace
For I know that when from the mansion of Hades hence thou art
gone, [70

Thou wilt bring thy ship to the land in the isle of *Ævæa* again ;
And when thither thou comest, O king, I bid thee remember me
then,

Nor leave me unburied, unwept ; but in going forsake thou not
Me, lest for my sake upon thee the wrath of the Gods wax hot ;
But burn me along with my gear, even all that pertained unto me,
And heap me a barrow beside the shore of the hoary sea,
A wretch's memorial, a token to them that are yet for to be.
This do thou for me, and an oar on my sepulchre set up on high,
For in life 'twas my wont in the midst of my shipmates the oar to
ply.'

So did he speak, and I answered, and spake to that hapless one : So
' All this, O evil-starred, shall for thee be accomplished and done.'

So sundered by blood talked we, all weirdly and mournfully,
While the sword that I held to divide us faintly-glimmering shone,
And he on the further side still hollowly murmured on. [unto us,

And then, for the blood-spell brought her, a shadow drew nigh
Anticlea my mother, the daughter of high-souled *Autolycus*.

Ah me, but alive was she when to *Ilium* the sacred I went !—

Through blinding tears did I see her, for ruth were my heart-strings
rent ; [near,

Yet, for all mine anguish, my mother might not to the blood draw
Till I should enquire of that other, *Teiresias*, *Thebes*' great seer. 90

Forth of the shadowy band the form of *Teiresias* brake,
A sceptre of gold in his hand ; and the prophet knew me and spake :
' O *Zeus*' and *Laertes*' seed, *Odysseus* shiftful at need,

Why, hapless one, hast thou left the light of the sun, and art come
To look on the place of the dead, the joyless region of gloom ?

Nay then, step back from the trench, and withdraw the keen-edged
sword, [word.'

To the end I may drink of the blood, and may utter a soothfast

Then from the trench drew I back, and I sheathed the white-
starred blade ; [and said :

And he drank of the blood-pool black, and the soothsayer spake
' Of a home-coming sweet to the soul as honey thou fain wouldst
know : 100

But bitter and hard a God will make it for thee, for I trow [yet :
 The wrath the Earth-shaker hath stored in his heart shall find thee
 Thou didst blind his beloved son, and he will not forgive nor forget.
 Nathless, howe'er trouble-tossed, the haven of home shalt thou find,
 If from sacrilege thou wilt restrain thine own and thy comrades'
 mind [ship,

In the hour when anigh to Thrinacria's isle ye shall bring your
 Escaping from peril sore on the face of the violet deep,
 And grazing ye find the kine and the goodly sheep of the Sun,
 The God that beholdeth all and heareth whatever is done.

See that thou hurt them not, and take thought for thy home-
 returning ; 110

So out of woes shall ye come to the land for the which ye are
 yearning. [wreck await

But and if thou shalt do them a mischief, destruction and ship-
 Galley and shipmates alike ; and if thou be not joined in their fate,
 After years, after loss of thy men shalt thou reach home, lonely and
 late :

In an alien ship shalt thou come to a house of trouble and strife,
 Where insolent men are devouring thy substance, and wooing thy
 wife,

Giving her marriage-presents, and counting thee even as dead.
 Yet shalt thou take for the violence and wrong a vengeance dread.
 But so soon as the suitors within thine halls shall be slain by thine
 hand,—

Be it by craft, or in open fight with the brazen brand,— 120
 Depart from thine home, and carry a well-poised oar with thee,
 And journey, until thou be come to a folk knowing naught of the
 sea,

Who use not to mingle the savour of sea-born salt with their meat,
 Nor have looked on a ship or the pinions against her sides that beat.
 And the sign shall be this, when the goal is attained of thy wan-
 dering feet :

Thou shalt meet in the way as thou goest another wayfaring man,
 Who shall say that thou bear'st on thy goodly shoulder a winnow-
 ing fan. [bring,

There in the ground shalt thou plant the well-poised oar thou didst
 And shalt offer a sacrifice fair to Poseidon the earth-shaking king,
 A ram, and a bull, and a boar ; and then shalt thou turn back home,
 And there to the Gods everliving shalt offer a hecatomb, [130

In the order due, unto all that dwell in the heaven's broad dome.
 And at last in a good old age shall death come to thee out of the sea,
 Softly, so softly, and painlessly laying his finger on thee
 Overborne by the weight of years bliss-laden, thy people around
 Happy, and thriving in weal. Lo, all this true shall be found.'

So did he speak, and I to the seer made answer and said :

' Even so, I ween, have the high Gods spun my destiny-thread.
 But come, without fail tell this unto me, for thereof am I fain :

Yonder the spirit I see of mine own dear mother dead ; 140
 But she silently sitteth anigh to the blood, and she doth not deign
 To look on the face of her son, or to utter a word of greeting.
 King, tell me, how shall she know me again at this last meeting ? ’

So did I speak, and he straightway made answer to me, and he
 said :

‘ I will tell thee ; and no hard saying is this in thine heart to remain :
 For it shall be, that whom thou shalt suffer of all the ghosts of the
 dead [feign ;

To draw nigh to the blood, he shall utter the truth, and he cannot
 Whomsoe’er thou refusest shall backward return into darkness
 again.’

To the mansion of Hades descended the soul of the kingly seer :
 The words of the prophet ended, yet lived they still in mine ear. 150
 Then left I the place where I stood, till anigh me my mother drew,
 And drank of the dark-hued blood : then straightway her son she
 knew ; [pale lips flew ;

And she wailed at the sight, and the winged word-flight from her
 ‘ Son, how art thou come to the land that the darkness of death
 doth enfold,

Thou in the flesh ?—it is hard for the living this land to behold ;
 For mightiest rivers between, and terrible torrents flow,
 Yea, and the Ocean-stream,—what foot shall over it go ?

Is it so, that from Troy thou hast long been constrained o’er the
 waters to roam, [come,

And with ship and with crew on a dreary voyage hast hitherward
 And hast not seen Ithaca yet, nor thy wife in the halls of thine
 home ? ’ 160

So did she speak, and I unto her made answer, and said :
 ‘ My mother, I could not choose but come to the land of the dead,
 To enquire of the prophet of Thebes, Teiresias, sightless seer ;
 For ah, not yet to the land of Achaia have I come near,
 Nor set foot on our isle, but ever am wandering trouble-tost,
 From the day that first I followed with King Agamemnon’s host
 Unto Ilium, the war-horse land, with the people of Priam to fight.
 But come now, tell to me this, and answer me all aright :

How came the stroke of the outstretcher death that laid thee low ?
 Was it by long disease, or did Artemis come with her bow, 170
 And softly chill thee to death with arrows like falling snow ?

And tell me of those that I left behind, of my father and son.
 Are they holding my sceptre for me, or now hath another one
 Taken mine honour, saying I shall not return any more ? [done :
 And tell of the mind of the wife of my youth, and what she hath
 Doth she bide with my son still ? still is she queen of mine house-
 hold store ?

Or hath some proud prince of Achaia already wooed her and won ? ’

So did I speak, and my reverend mother forthright replied :
 ‘ Now nay, but still with a patient spirit thy wife doth abide

In thy halls ; and evermore, for the burden of sorrow she bears, 180
 Her days are consumed with heaviness, yea, and her nights with
 But thy fair honour hath no man hitherto taken, but yet [tears.
 Telemachus holdeth in peace thy domain, and on high is he set
 In the feasts, where it fits that a ruler of men sit princes beside,
 For of all is he bidden : but ever thy sire in the field doth abide
 Alone, for down to the city he never doth come, and his bed
 Is not with mantles and shining rugs full softly spread ;
 But in winter he layeth him down in the house beside the fire
 In the ashes, amid the thralls, apparelled in evil attire. [190
 But as soon as the summer is come with a glory of golden sheaves,
 Low on the ground he lieth amidst of the fallen leaves,
 Anywhere under the naked sky in the vineyard-close :
 There doth he lie in his anguish of heart, and his grief ever grows
 With longing for thee, and now is he come unto joyless eld.
 For this cause also I died, when the day of my doom I beheld.
 For not in my halls did far-seeing Artemis come with her bow,
 And softly chill me to death with arrows like falling snow :
 No sickness was it that came upon me to steal away
 The life from the tortured limbs by the wasting of long decay.
 Ah no, my beloved, my son ! 'twas the aching of yearning for
 thee, 200
 For thy counsels and sweet lovingkindness, that broke the heart of
 me !'

Blazed in my bosom the fire of a vehement strong desire
 My dear dead mother's shade with the arms of my love to enfold ;
 Springing forward thrice I essayed in my clasp my beloved to hold :
 From mine hands did she thrice take flight like a shadow or dream
 of the night !

O sharp was the thorn of my pain, O bitter my sore heart-ache,
 As I cried through the darkness again, as from depths of despair I
 spake : [fold thee,
 ' O mother, my mother, why wilt thou not wait for mine arms to en-
 That even in Hades in loving embrace to my heart I may hold thee,
 That from mourning's bitter-sweet cup the chill tear-draught we
 may drain ? 210

Ah, can it be that Persephonê sends but a phantom vain
 Hither, to double my sighing, and sharpen the tooth of my pain ?'

Thus as I wailed, forthwith did my mother reply to me then :
 ' Ah no, my son, ill-fated beyond the children of men !
 It is not that Persephonê cheateth thine eyes with a phantom-lie ;
 But thus it is ever with mortals, as soon as their lot is to die ;
 For no more have they sinews enwrapping the flesh and the bones
 of their frame ; [flame,
 But all these things were consumed by the might of the death-pyre
 So soon as the life had forsaken the white bones, quitting its clay,
 And the soul as a vanishing dream upon shadowy wings fled
 away. [220

But press thou back with speed to the light of the day and of life,
And remember all thou hast seen, to tell it one day to thy wife.'

Hushed was the voice, and the ghost had departed, I saw not
whither.

In her place was a countless host,—Persephonê sent them thither,—
The wives and the daughters of those great heroes of olden fame;
In throngs upon throngs they arose, and around the blood they
came.

And awoke the desire in my breast to ask each, there as she stood,
Her story; and thus it seemed best to attain unto that which I
would:

I drew my falchion long and keen from beside my thigh, [230
And suffered not all the throng at once to the blood to draw nigh;
But one by one they came, and the blood gave memory and speech;
And they told me their race and name, as in order I questioned each.

First Tyro told me her story, the tale of a princely house,
Of her sire Salmoneus' glory, of Cretheus her hero-spouse.
And she loved Enipeus divine, the beautiful-flowing stream
Whose waters the fairest shine of all that in sunlight gleam;
And all through the day by his side did she stray in a sweet love-
dream.

But in shape of her lover the Shaker of Earth met the maiden sweet,
And in loving embrace did he take her, where sea-tide and river-
swirl meet; [240

And around them on either side did the wave in a dark arch curl,
Like the swell of a mountain, to hide the God and the beautiful
girl; [bride.

And her maidenhead-zone he untied, and he poured sleep over his
But or ever the God took flight from the arms of the mortal maid,
Folding her fingers white in his own, he bespake her and said:

'Have joy of thy love, my sweet: in the fulness of time shalt thou
Goodliest sons, for a God's bed ever hath offspring fair. [bear

Thou shalt heedfully nurse the children that I have given to thee.
Now go to thine home, and see that thou speak unto no man of me;
For my love, for my fair, thou hast known the Earth-shaker, the
Lord of the Sea.' [more there. 250

With a roar were the waters upheaved, and behold, he was no
And Tyro thereafter conceived, and Pelias and Neleus she bare;
And the servants of Zeus they became, even kings of glorious fame,
For Pelias ruled o'er the wide sheep-tracts of Iolcos' land,
And his brother was king beside the sea upon Pylos' strand.
And the beautiful princess gave unto Cretheus sons of might,
Aeson and Pheres, and brave Amythaon, the warrior wight.

Then a statelier phantom came, and Antiopê next saw I:
Hers was a glorious shame, in the Thunderer's arms to lie.
Two sons did she bear to the God, Amphion and Zethus they were,
Who built Thebes-town their abode, with her seven gates stately
and fair; 260

And they gave her a crown of pride, even rampart and tower high-pight,

For they could not in Thebè abide unfencèd, for all their might.

After her Alcmenè the wife of Amphitryon did I behold,
Who bare one dauntless in strife, even Héracles lion-souled ;
For her mortal charms the resistless arms of Zeus did enfold.

Then Megara rose to my sight, whom Creon begat in his pride,
Whom the ever-untiring might of Héracles won for his bride.

And the mother of Oedipus there I beheld, Epicastè the fair,
Who accomplished an awful doom for herself, or ever she knew ; [270
For she married the son of her womb : yea, first his father he slew,
Then wedded his mother, and straight the Gods made all to be known.

And in anguish bitter and great he sat upon fair Thebes' throne ;
Over Cadmus' people he reigned, as the Gods for his ruin ordained :
But she through the portals hied whence none returneth again,
When the noose to the beam she tied, swallowed up in her heart-sick pain.

But a curse-cup bitter as gall, and filled with woes to the brim
Did she leave for his lips, even all that her Furies mingled for him.

Rose Chloris, fair beyond word, Amphion's youngest daughter,
By whose beauty was Neleus stirred, and with countless gifts he sought her. [280

And the might of her father's hand stretched over the Minyan land ;
But she queened it on Pylos' strand whereunto her husband brought her.

And with Nestor and Chromius there Periclymenus noble-souled
Was born, and a daughter fair as the Goddesses are to behold,
Even Pero, a wonder to men ; and princes of many a land
Came wooing the maiden then, but her sire would bestow that hand
Only on him who, for dower, should the kine from Phylacè bring,
Wresting them out of the power of Iphiclus, terrible king.

And alone on the perilous quest a peerless prophet pressed,
In vain ; for the doom of a God into bonds and imprisonment brought him,
[caught him. 290

When, anigh to the goal as he trod, the herdmen waylaid him and
And slowly a year rolled round, day wearily following day,
And Melampus in duress bound, with none to deliver him, lay.
Till at last for his ransoming he must all his prophecies yield ;
So Iphiclus set him free, and the counsel of Zeus was fulfilled.

And Leda beheld I there, that was wife unto Tyndareus once.
In the halls of his palace she bare two mighty-hearted sons,
Polydeucès the fist-renowned, and Castor the steed-queller, whom
The life-giving earth hath bound alive in the nether gloom :
Howbeit there have they found high honour by Zeus's doom ;
For on days interchanging they live, and anon do the gates of the grave
Each after other receive, and honour divine they have. 300

Then came one fair to behold, the wife of Alôeus was she,
Iphimedeia, who told of the love of the Lord of the Sea ;
And she spake of her sons and their might, and the few short years
that they found,

Of Otus the god-strong wight, Ephialtes far-renowned ;
And they were the tallest ones that the corn-giving earth ever bred,
And the goodliest of all her sons, save Orion's glorious head ;
For when nine years scantly had rolled, nine fathom their stature was,
And in cubits nine was told the breadth of their shoulders across.
Yea, and they threatened to smite the Gods themselves, the
Immortals, 310

In Olympus to marshal the fight, and to burst through the heavenly
portals.

Yea, Ossa in fury they strove to upheave on Olympus on high,
With forest-clad Pelion above, that thence they might step to the sky.
Ay, and the deed had they done, had they reached but the noontide
of life ;

But Zeus' and Leto's son destroyed them in that first strife,
Or ever, their temples beneath, bloomed blossom of young down
fair, [hair.

Or on chin and on cheek as a wreath fell the shadow of clustering
And with Phædra and Procris I saw Ariadnê, the lovely daughter
Of Minos, dread giver of law ; it was Theseus who fain had
brought her

To the holy Athenian plain ; but in sea-girt Dia, through spite 320
Of the Wine-god, his love lay slain by Artemis' arrow-flight.

With Mæra and Clymenê rose Eriphylê, the traitress-wife,
Who received the gold of his foes for the price of her husband's life.
—But I could not name to thee all, nor the endless array unfold
Of the wives and the daughters I saw of the glorious heroes of old ;
For the darkness would flush into dawning ere half of the story
were told.

But now is it time to sleep : I will go and lie down with the crew
In the galley, or here, and will trust my journey to heaven and
you." [or stirred ;

Through the shadowy halls all round was a hush, none murmured
But they sat as in trance, spell-bound by the charm of the tale that
they heard ; 330

Till the fair queen broke the silence, and spoke from her heart the
word :

" Phæacians, what think ye of the stranger ?—how seemeth to you
His stature, his comeliness, and the mind that is matched there—
In sooth he is *my* guest, yet do ye all in the honour share : [unto ?
Wherefore haste not to send him away from our midst, neither
grudgingly spare [treasure

Your gifts unto one that so sorely doth need them, for heaps of
Are stored in the halls of our princes in whom the Gods take
pleasure."

Then to the princes spoke Echenêus the greybeard hoar,
 The oldest of all the folk that dwelt on Phæacia's shore :
 " Friends, fitly and well doth the wise queen speak ; we must needs
 give ear : 340

Yet word and performance hang on our lord Alcinous here."

Then unto him did Alcinous stately answer give :

" Yea, this shall be even as the Queen hath said, if indeed I live,
 If indeed I sit on the throne the oar-loving nation among.
 Yet let the stranger be patient, howe'er for his home he may long,
 And in any wise bide till the morrow, till crowned by the gifts of
 mine hand [stand,

Be his store ; and his journey full near unto all our hearts doth
 Unto mine above all, for mine is the lordship over the land."

Then unto him subtle-witted Odysseus in answer spoke :

" Lord King Alcinous, high-renowned among all earth-folk, 350
 If ye should bid me here through the round of a year to stay,
 And thereafter with splendid gifts to mine home would help me
 away, [same,

More for my gain should it be, and full fain would I be of the
 If so with hands more full to the land of my fathers I came ;
 For thus should I have more worship and love in the sight of men,
 Even all that beheld me thus unto Ithaca coming again."

And Alcinous lifted his voice, and answering spake unto him :

" Odysseus, think not that we doubt thee, who look on thy face, or
 misdeem, [breeds
 As though thou couldst be a deceiver, as they that the dark earth
 Broadcast, knaves springing everywhere up, as evil weeds, 360
 Weaving the webs of their lies out of yarn gathered none knoweth
 whence ;

But thy words are a topstone of grace on a sure foundation of sense :
 And as though 'twere a great bard singing, dost thou our ears
 enthrall [all.

With the tale of the troubles that came upon thee and the Argives
 But come now, answer me this, and hide it not from me, I pray :

Sawest thou any of those, the godlike men that away
 Unto Ilium passed with thee, and came there on their evil day ?
 Lo, yet there is much of the night, yea, a measureless length, no
 need

That we sleep too soon ; prithee still let the marvellous story speed.
 Oh, I could list till the dawning, if thou in mine hall wouldst tell 370
 Through the charmed hours still of thy deeds, and the woes unto
 thee that befell."

Then unto him subtle-witted Odysseus in answer spoke :

" Lord King Alcinous, high-renowned among all earth-folk,
 In sooth there is time for much talk yet, and for slumber too.
 If still ye be fain to attend, I will spare not to tell unto you
 This tale—O yea, and a sadder, a darker story beside,
 Even the woes of my friends, who afterward wretchedly died,

Who escaped from the edge of the sword and the roar of the death-dealing strife,

And returned home, there to be slain by the will of a traitor wife.

Into the hollows of night did the beautiful spectres fade, 380
Dispersed by Persephonè's might, but I thrilled as I peered through the shade;

For out of the nethergloom one heart-stricken with anguish arose, Agamemnon, Atreus' son; and a throng was around him of those In Aegisthus' hall that were slain by his side in a cursèd hour.

And he drank, and he knew me again by the blood-draught's magical power;

And he wailed, ah bitterly, shedding the tears like winter rain; And he strove to embrace me, spreading his shadowy arms in vain.

Ah me for the king of men!—there was no strength left any more In the frame so helpless then, in the limbs so mighty of yore!

And when I beheld him, I wept, and my heart with compassion was stirred; 390

And I lifted my voice, and leapt to my lips the light-winged word: 'Agamemnon, monarch of men, good hero of high renown,

What doom of the outstretcher death unto this hath brought thee down?

Was it Poseidon against thee that wakened the maddening breath Of the winds, and through whirlpits of ravening seas dragged thee unto death?

Or wast thou by foes in the midst of a foray o'ertaken and slain, As seaward thou dravest their cattle and sheep from the harried plain?

Wert thou warring about some city or some fair woman again?'

So did I speak, and he straightway made answer to me, and replied:

'O Zeus' and Laertes' son, in manifold shifts deep-tried, 400

It was not Poseidon against me that wakened the maddening breath Of the winds, or through whirlpits of ravening seas dragged me unto death;

Nor did foes overmaster and slay me by land or in open fight:

But my death, but my doom by the treacherous hand of Aegisthus was dight:

For along with my murderous wife he bade me unto his hall, And there did he slay me, as one should slaughter an ox at the stall.

So did I die a most pitiful death; and my warrior train Were ruthlessly butchered around me, as white-tushed boars are slain,

When a mighty man of wealth will a princely banquet provide For a marriage, for mirth with his friends, or for some high festival-tide. 410

Oft hast thou stood in the place where the sword was uplifted to slay,

When in single fight men died, or by hosts in the terrible fray,

Nor quailed; but thine heart had with horror turned sick hadst
 thou looked on that day, [covered o'er,
 To see how we lay round the wine-bowl and tables with cheer
 And the hall in a mist with the reek of our blood steaming up from
 the floor. [daughter

But most piteous of all was the shriek that I heard from Priam's
 Cassandra; the traitress my wife Clytæmnestra had dragged her to
 slaughter [ground,

To die by my side: I writhed round the sword as I lay on the
 Helplessly lifting and dropping my hands: but the shameless hell-
 hound [her hand, 420

Left me to die, and she deigned not to press down mine eyes with
 Nor to close up my lips as the soul fluttered forth to the shadow-
 land.

—Oh there is nothing so loathly and shameless as woman can be,
 Who can plot such a deed in her breast as a woman devised against
 me,— [wrought,

Such a horrible outrage, so ghastly a deed as she purposed and
 That a wedded wife should murder her husband!—ah me, I had
 thought

With joy amid children and thralls in mine home to find sweet rest;
 But her thoughts were abysses of horror, a hell was aflame in her
 breast.

Shame hath she poured on herself, and to all other women dishonour
 Shall cling: though a woman should do good deeds, that stain will
 be on her.'

So did he speak, and I rendered him answer, and uttered my
 thought: 430

'Alas, it hath still been by women that far-seeing Zeus hath
 brought [wrought.

Mischief on Atreus' seed from the first, and their ruin hath
 Through Helen it was that by thousands we died on an alien
 strand; [planned.'

And for thee when afar from thine home Clytæmnestra this treachery
 So did I speak, and he straightway made answer to me, and he
 said:

'Therefore do thou take heed, nor by love of thy wife be betrayed;
 Tell her not all of the thing that thou knowest, but tell her in part;
 There at least shall the rest of thy counsel be safe, in thine own true
 heart.

Yet shall not thy murder, Odysseus, at all by thy wife be wrought,
 For excellent wisdom hath she, she is loyal in every thought, 440
 That child of Icarius' line, Penelopë prudent-hearted.

In sooth we left her a fair young bride, what time we departed
 To go to the war, and a babe at her breast was she nursing then;
 But now, I ween, thy son shall be sitting a man amongst men.
 Happy is he, for him shall his father returning see,
 And he shall embrace that father, as ever it ought to be.

Ah me! for my wife suffered not that my eyes with delight should
be filled

In beholding my son; ere then his father, her husband, she killed.
This too will I tell thee, and thou in thine heart my counsel store:
In secret, not openly, bring thy ship to thy fatherland-shore, 450
Unawares to thy wife, for no more faith in women there is.

But come now, declare unto me, and without fail tell me this:
Have ye heard of my son, of Orestes, alive? and in what strange
land

Is he exiled?—Orchomenus?—Is it by Pylos' sandy strand?
Or doth he, Menelaus my brother, protect him in Sparta the wide?
For surely I know not yet hath the godlike Orestes died.'

Eagerly spake he, but I full mournfully made reply:
'Atreides, why dost thou ask me? I know not, neither have heard
Whether he lives or is dead, and as wind were an idle word.' [460

So there by the side of the blood, communing in converse drear,
And in anguish of heart we stood, as we shed full many a tear.

But there came to me chiefs of pride; came Achilles, the peerless
one,

With Patroclus still by his side; came Antilochus, Nestor's son;

Came Ajax, a stately ghost, who in comeliness once outshone

All men in the Danaan host, save matchless Peleides alone.

And anigh as Achilles drew, his comrade in battle he knew,

And he wailed at the sight, and the winged word-flight from his pale
lips flew:

'O Zeus' and Laertes' seed, Odysseus shiftful at need,
Desperate man!—wilt thou dare in thy soul yet a hardier deed?
How durst thou come down into Hades, where dwell but the sense-
less dead, 470

The phantoms of mortals forwearied, whose strength is utterly fled?'

Answering then did I speak to the hero renowned in war:

'O scion of Peleus, mightiest of all the Achæans by far,

I came in my need to enquire of the soul of Teiresias the seer

How I might win unto Ithaca's island, the rugged, the dear.

For not yet have I come to Achaia, nor yet have my feet lighted
down [crown.

In my kingdom, but aye have I woe to my heritage, pain for my

But thou—O Achilles, no man hath been happier in days overpast,

Neither shall be; of yore as a God in thy life-days honoured thou
wast [the dead. 480

Of the Argives; and now hast thou honour and worship amongst

Ah grieve not, Achilles, to know that the years of thy life are fled.'

Instantly answered the hero with burst of passionate breath:

'Happy!—come not unto me with thy babble of comfort in death!

Rather would I be a hireling to drudge in the fields all day

With a landless master, who sparsely would feed me and niggardly
pay, [sway.

Than over the hosts of the dead which have perished a sceptre to

But thou, as concerning my princely son, some tidings show ;
 Whether he went to the war to be first in the battle, or no.
 And tell me, concerning the high-born Peleus, hast aught to unfold ?
 Hath he honour and worship still mid the Myrmidon folk as of old ?

[490
 Or through Hellas and Phthia-land now is he held in little esteem,
 For that eld hath laid hold on his hands and his feet, and hath
 palsied him ?

[sun,
 For I am not with him to champion his cause in the sight of the
 Clothed with the might that I had, when in broad Troy many an one
 Of our foes, as I fought for the Argives, was sped to the shadowland-
 home.

[come,
 For a day, for an hour, to the house of my sires as of old could I
 Ha, they should quail at my prowess, and rue my invincible hands,
 Who are evil entreating him now, and are robbing of honour and

So did he eagerly ask, and in answer I took up the word : [lands !'
 ' Soothly to say, of the high-born Peleus naught have I heard. 500
 But concerning the son of thy love, Neoptolemus, now will I tell,
 Even as thou bid'st me, nor false shall my tale be, but all as befell.
 For, 'twas I, even I, in the galley who brought him from Scyros
 away

[fray.
 To the host of Achæans well harnessed for battle, athirst for the
 And whene'er in the pauses of conflict for counsel together we
 drew,

[true.
 First was he ever in speech, and his words were as shafts flying
 Only Nestor the godlike and I could thy son in the council surpass :
 But whene'er in the plain of the Trojans we fought with the light-
 ning of brass,

[fight ;
 Ne'er in the throng would he wait, nor abide in the phalanx to
 Far before all would he rush, for he yielded to no man in might. 510
 And many and many a hero he slew in the terrible fray :

[say,
 I never could tell thee of all of them, no, nor their names could I
 How many a hero he slew, for the bulwark of Argives he was ;
 I will speak but of one, even Telephus' son, whom he smote with
 the brass,

The hero Eurypylus ; round him were many Keteians o'erthrown,
 Who perished, by reason that presents a woman's light fancy had
 won.

Save Memnon the godlike, goodlier man in the host saw I none.
 Then, when we entered and crouched in the horse that Epeius had
 made,

We chiefs of the Argives, and all things were ordered as I had said,
 When to shut and to open the ambush-cave lay only with me, 520
 The rest of the captains and chiefs of the Danaans there might ye
 see

[for fear :
 Wiping the tears from their eyes, while the limbs of them shivered
 But never mine eyes might behold Neoptolemus wiping the tear ;
 Never in any wise faded the flush of his face into wan ;

Nay, but he ever besought me to forth of the horse, and set on ;
 And restlessly ever his hands to the hilt of his falchion would go,
 Ever shivered the lance in his grip, for he longed to be smiting the
 foe.

But when we had smitten the city of Priam, and parted the spoil,
 He went to his galley with goodliest prey and reward of his toil,
 Scarless, untouched by the rush of the lance as it leapt through the
 air ;

He had closed in the conflict with heroes, yet none ever wounded
 him there, [spare,']

Where few have escaped, when too mad is the War-god to favour or

Then the soul of the mighty dead, of Aeacus' fleet-foot son,
 O'er the asphodel-mead in his pride swept back with a stately stride,
 Exulting because I had said that his offspring was second to none.

But the spirit of every chief beside, of the dead that had perished,
 Thronged round me, stricken with grief, and they asked me of kin
 Only the soul of one, even Ajax, Telamon's son, [dear-cherished.

Would not draw nigh unto me, being wroth for the victory lost
 When we pleaded beside the sea in the court of the Argive host, 540
 When the arms once borne by her son as a prize by Thetis were
 given ; [that passed,—

—'Twas the sons of the Trojans at last, and Athenê, the sentence
 And O that I never had won, and O that we never had striven !

So noble a head sank low for those arms into the grave,
 Even Ajax, in outward show most goodly, in fight most brave
 Of all the Danaan men, save the peerless Achilles alone.

And I spake to the hero then soft words, and in humblest tone :

' O son of a glorious sire, is it so, that thou wast ordained
 Not even in death to forget thy wrath for the war-gear I gained,
 The accurst, which the Gods ordained for the Danaans' ruin to be ?
 Such a tower of strength was in thee overthrown, and the Argives
 for thee

Mourned as they mourned for the head of Achilles, Peleus' seed,
 Bitterly mourned for thy death ;—and who was to blame for the deed
 Save Zeus, who looked on the Danaan host with a terrible hate,
 And dealt unto us sore loss, and laid upon thee this fate ?

O king, come hither, come hither, and list to the words that I say !
 O bend the pride of thine heart, and turn from thine anger away !'

So I pleaded : he answered me naught, but implacable thence he
 strode, [abode.

And the nethergloom darkness he sought, where the rest of the spirits
 Howbeit e'en there had I spoken, his silence perchance had been
 broken ;

But mine heart was fain in my breast to turn a little aside, [died. 560

And to look but once on the rest of the spirits of them which had
 There Minos did I behold, Zeus' son, the lawgiver dread,
 Grasping a sceptre of gold, giving statutes unto the dead
 There as he sat, and the ghosts were enquiring their rights of him,

Sitting and standing ; hosts in the gloom showing shadowy-dim.

Then before mine eyes did there pass Orion, a giant shadow,
As he drove in a huddled mass the beasts o'er the asphodel meadow,
His quarry in days of yore through many a lone hill-fold ;

And a mace in his hands he bore, all brazen, of adamant mould. 570

And Tityus there did I see, great Earth-mother's son was he,
Who lay fettered down on the plain over nine roods' length extend-
ing ;

Right and left of him vultures twain were sitting, his liver rending :
Into the caul pierced they, nor his hands might drive them away ;
For from outrage to Leto the bride of Zeus did he not refrain
What time unto Pylos she hied through Panopeus' beautiful plain.

Yea, Tantalus there saw I with his cup overbrimming with woes ;
For he stood amid water, and high as his chin the ripples rose ;
And he strained in a horrible drouth ever vainly to reach the stream ;
For, as oft as the old man's mouth quivered near to the maddening
gleam, 580

Ever the waters would fleet swallowed up, and the earth all round
Was dry by the wretch's feet, for a God's power rifted the ground.
And tall trees over him stooping were swinging around him there
Their fruits ; there were pomegranates drooping, the golden apple,
the pear ;

Sweet figs at his lips close hung, and the olives gleamed thereby ;
But when that woe-wrinkled wretch to reach them his hands would
stretch, [high.

By a gust were they snatched and flung to the shadowy clouds on

There Sisyphus saw I receiving his guerdon of mighty pain :

A monster rock upheaving with both hands aye did he strain ;
With feet firm-fixed, hands pressed, with gasps, with toil most sore
That rock up towards a crest heaved he ; but a little more [590

And atop of the hill would it rest—resistlessly turning again
With a merciless leap, with a hurricane-sweep it hath rushed to
the plain.

But toiling, straining yet, in his great despair did he thrust :
Down poured from his limbs the sweat, and arose from his head
the dust.

Next after him did I see where the might of Hêracles strode—

A phantom, for feasting is he in the deathless Gods' abode,

And Hebê is there at his side, his lovely-ankled bride ;

The daughter of Zeus is she, and of Herê the golden-shod.

There was round him a hurtling of ghosts as of birds in terror-
struck flight ; 600

For appalled were the shadowy hosts, and gloomy he strode as the
night, [his eye

Ever grasping his bow made bare, with the shaft on the string, and
Flashing round with a terrible glare, he was ever in act to let fly.

And an awful belt he wore, a baldric of massy gold,

Around his breast, and it bore devices and marvels untold ;

There were bears, wild boars of the wood, there were lions with
furious glare ; [there.

There was battle and murder and blood, and slayings of heroes were
—Let him who fashioned it, king of his craft, set his hand not
Unto any meaner thing, for higher he ne'er shall attain ! [again

And he knew me as soon as he turned his eyes my face to see ; 610

And the shade of the hero mourned as the light-winged words
' O Zeus' and Laertes' seed, Odysseus shiftful at need ! [spake he :

Ah wretch, full evil thy fate, full sorry the life thou dost lead,

Even such as the burden I bore 'neath the light of the sun long ago !

Yet I was the scion of Zeus the son of Kronos ; but woe

Without limit or measure I had : for a servant was I given o'er

To a man far weaker and worse, who laid on me troubles sore.

Yea, hitherward once did he send me to fetch Hell's Dog ; for he
thought

No task could be sorer than this, no deed more hard to be wrought ;

Yet did I bring it from Hades, and haled to the light of the day ; 620

For me did Hermes and Pallas the grey-eyed speed on my way.'

Then Hades-ward did he set his face, and he plunged into gloom.

But there did I tarry yet, to see if perchance there would come

Other heroes famous of yore who had died in the days of old ;

And of these had I seen yet more, whom my heart was fain to be-
hold,

Peirithous and Theseus, of fame full high, who of Gods' seed came ;

But the tribes of the dead folk drew by myriads near and more near

With awful shrieks, and I knew that my cheeks were white with
fear,

With a sudden horrible dread lest Persephonè forth should send

From Hades the Gorgon-head of a hideous monster-fiend. 630

So with speed to the shore I hied me ; my mates did I there command

To climb the black ship's side, and to cast her loose from the strand.

And swiftly aboard did they go, and they sat them down to the oar ;

And the Ocean-river's flow o'er the surges the galley bore,

At the first with rowing, till came, fair-blowing, a breeze from the
shore.

BOOK XII.

Of Scylla, the Crag-fiend, and the whirlpit Charybdis ;
of the kine of the Sun, and the swift vengeance
for sacrilege.

WHEN the galley had carried us free of the swift smooth stream
of the Ocean, [its motion,
And came to the broad-wayed sea, with the heave and the swing of
And the Isle of Ææa, wherein is the palace of Dawn mist-born,
And the lawns where her dances begin, and the sun goeth forth each
morn,

Thither at dusk came we, and we ran up the ship on the sand,
And out on the surf of the sea we stept, and went up to the land.
And wearily there we slept, and the dawn divine we abode
Till the Rosy-fingered leapt from her couch where the grey mists
glowed.

My shipmates then did I send to the palace of Circê, to bear [10
Unto us the corpse of our friend Elpenor, the dead that lay there :
And, hewing us billets in haste, on a wave-washed foreland's height
The dead on the pyre we placed, and our tears fell fast at the sight.
And as soon as the burning was done of the corpse and the dead
man's gear,

A barrow of earth and stone we uppile, and a pillar we rear,
And a well-poised oar thereupon did we set, that his craft might
appear.

So his dues to the dead we gave ; and we 'scaped not Circê's ken,
As back from the gates of the grave I returned with my trusty men.
But she came in her beauteous array, and her maidens along with
her came ; [of flame :
And the bread and the meat bare they, and the wine with its face
And she stood in the midst, and spake the beautiful Goddess
immortal : 20

' Desperate men, who could win back again from Hades' portal !
Twice dead !—since the rest of the dead pass once for all through
his door.

But come now, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I pour
Here through the livelong day, and as soon as the dawn shall break
On the morrow, sail ye away, and the path of the track ye shall take
Will I point, that ye safely may cross strange water and unknown
shore,

And suffer nor sorrow nor loss by evil misdealing more.'

So did she speak to the men, and her counsel was good in their
eyes ;

And so through the long day then, till the sun sank out of the skies,
Sat we, feasting upon sweet wine and on meats untold, 30

Even till the sun was gone, and the gloom gathered, fold upon fold.
And they went, and down on the sand by the black ship's hawser
they lay ; [away,

But the Goddess took me by the hand, and she led from my friends
And she laid herself down by my side, and she asked of me all that
befell,

And, as everything chanced to betide, even all unto her did I tell.
Then the words of her counsel spake the dread queen Circê to me,
Telling the track I should take o'er the waste of the ways of the sea :
' Thus far hast thou sped ; but leaving the things of the past behind
thee,

List unto what I shall say,—yea, a God himself shall remind thee ;—
First shalt thou come to the Sirens, the maidens that aye sit flinging
Charms over all that approach, by the spell of their magical singing.
Whosoever unwittingly cometh, and heareth the Witch-maids'
voices,

Never returneth he homewards, never his wife rejoices
To look on his face any more, no children shall cluster around him,
But the clear-ringing chant of the Sirens for ever and ever hath
bound him,

There as they sit in a meadow, with heaps of skeletons lying,
Bodies of dead men rotting, and skins all shrivelled in drying.
Speed away past ; and with wax, made soft for the oversmearing,
Seal up the ears of thy men, making fast each gateway of hearing.
Yet thou mayest list to their lay, if thy spirit shall so have inclined
thee ; 50

But hand and foot thy men in the fleet-faring galley shall bind thee,
On the mast-step standing, and ropes from the mast all round thee
clinging ;

So with delight shalt thou list to the voice of the Sirens singing.
And if thou shalt bid them unbind thee, commanding or earnestly
praying,

Then shall they bind thee the faster, new fetters upon thee laying.

Now as soon as thy shipmates have sped out of reach of the
perilous strain,

Boots not to tell thee thereafter throughout which path out of twain
Shall be thine for the rest of thy seafaring : both will I tell thee,
and so

Give counsel thyself to thine heart, and make choice of the way thou wilt go :

For by one shalt thou come unto rocks overarching, and there evermore 60

The surge of the dark Sea-queen doth mightily tumble and roar.

These be the cliffs that the Gods ever-blessèd the Wanderers name,— [same,

Yea, and the swift-wingèd birds of the air cannot win through the No, not even the doves that to Zeus the ambrosia bring ;

But ever the sheer rock snatcheth away one of these on the wing, And so the All-father must send in another to make up the tale.

And thereby never yet hath a crew in a galley been suffered to sail, But the planks of ships and the bodies of men are whirled with a crash [dash.

By the blasts of the fire that devours, and the waves that resistlessly Only one ship hath prevailed through the portal of terror to come, 70 Argo, of world-wide fame, as she sailed from the Colchians home ; Yea and of her had the rocks and the breakers at once made an end, But 'twas Herê that sped her therethrough, for a grace unto Jason her friend.

Guarding the gates of the sea at its other outgoing arise Rocks, whereof one of the twain with its peak towers up to the skies, Luridly curtained about with a cloud never passing away :

Never, in summer or winter, thereon is clear shining of day.

Never a mortal might climb up its face, nor adown it might fare :

Naught, though his hands and his feet were a score, would it profit him there. [80

Slippery-smooth is the face of the cliff, as 'twere polished, I wis ;

And in mid-height, but with mist overdarkened, a cavern there is

Facing the west, to the shadow-land turned. By the cliff with good heed

Keep thou thy galley, Odysseus, unswervingly guiding its speed.

Though a man shoot at the cave from a ship with his uttermost might, [height.

Wearied the arrow would drop ere it won to the measureless

There in the cave dwelleth Scylla : her voice is a hideous yelp ;

Faint is the cry of the horrible thing as the whine of a whelp :

Ah, but her form ! 'tis a monster : whoever should look upon her,

None should have joy of the meeting, not though of the Deathless he were. [long 90

Twelve are her feet all as serpents down-trailing, and six are the Necks with the terrible heads, and the teeth in the jaws of them throng [and strong.

Rank upon rank ; they are full of black death, they are crowded

Down to the waist in the cavern she hideth, and yet evermore

Scoureth the face of the crag, for the heads of her traverse it o'er,

Forth of the cavern far-reaching ; and there they are angling for prey,

For dolphins and sea-dogs, and huger sea-monsters that pasture and
play, [shock.

Thousands on thousands, mid moaning of waters that welter and
Never hath sailor made boast that his galley hath run by the rock
Scatheless, but each of her heads cometh swooping adown on the
ship : [100

Six of the crew in a moment are snatched unto death in their grip.

Lowlier lieth the rock that is over against her in place ;—
Nigh to each other they are, that an arrow might traverse the
space ;—

O'er it a fig-tree, gigantic ; its leaf-masses gloomily frown,
'Neath it resistless Charybdis the black water whelmeth adown :
Thrice in the day she doth belch it on high, and thrice whelmeth it
under—

Ah, mayest thou not be there when the waters are yawning asunder !
Thee not the Earth-shaker's self from the jaws of destruction
could drag.

Nay, but in any wise swiftly speed onward thy ship by the crag
Where is the dwelling of Scylla ; for better it is that thou miss
Six of thy mates, than that all in a moment go down the abyss.' 110

Answered I, ' Prithee, O Goddess, declare this truly to me,—
Might I escape from the ruinous sweep of the whirl of the sea,
And when Scylla shall swoop on my men, by my sword might I
cause her to flee ? ' [word,—

Instantly answered the Goddess—my heart sank down at the
' Desperate man !—what, again for the conflict thy courage is
stirred !

What, when the Gods ever-living assail, wilt thou then not refrain ?
Not of the deathlings is she, but a deathless, a ruinous bane,
Hideous to look upon, hard to encounter, resistless in fight ;
Valour and prowess are impotent, nothing availeth but flight.
If by the side of the rock to put on thee thy harness thou stay, 120
Forth the insatiate fiend will come darting again for her prey ;
Each of the horrible heads from the galley its victim will tear :—
Nay, but in any wise speed thee along with thy might, and in
prayer

Cry to Crataiis her dam, that hath borne her to mortals a bane ;
Cry, if perchance she will stay her from swooping upon thee again.

Next shalt thou come to Thrinacria's isle, and therein on the
mead

Many a herd of the Sun-god's kine and his fair sheep feed :
Seven are the herds of his kine, and the flocks of his sheep are
seven,

Fifty in each ; and they die not, nor unto them increase is given.
Goddesses tend them for shepherds, the maids that Neæra bare 130
To the Sun, Phaëthusa and Lampetië with her shining hair :
She bare them, and nursed, and sent forth from their home the
Sun-god's daughters,

To keep watch on his kine and his sheep far off amid lonely waters.
See that thou hurt them not, and take thought for thy home-
returning ; [yearning.

So out of woes shall ye win to the land for the which ye are
But and if thou shalt do them a mischief, destruction and shipwreck
await

Galley and shipmates alike ; and if thou be not joined in their fate,
After years, after loss of thy men, shalt thou reach home, lonely
and late.'

So did she speak, and anon rose Dawn on her golden throne ; [140
And up through the island was gone the Goddess, and I was alone.
So down to the shore I hied, and my mates did I there command
To climb the black ship's side, and to cast her loose from the strand.
So they entered up into the ship, and they sat them down to the
stroke ;

And the sea with the orderly dip of the blades into hoar foam broke.
And a brave wind sprang up behind, and I felt the dark prow lift
As the sail bellied out with the wind, and I knew it for Circé's gift—
Dread Goddess of voice most sweet, and glorious braided hair :—
And when we had fastened the sheet and the rest of the tackling
with care,

Sat we at ease, and the hand of the helmsman ordered the rest. [150
Then spake I unto my band with a burden of pain on my breast :
' Friends, it pertaineth to all to attend to the words I shall say,
The oracles Circé gave ere she sped us forth on our way.
I will declare them to you, and choose ye, whether to die,
Or whether to take good heed of the snare, and the death to fly.
First of the weird ones, the Sirens, she bade us to take good heed,
And to flee from their magical song, and the flowers of the charmed
mead.

She commanded me only to hear, but with galling ropes made fast :
Firm on the mast-step set me, and lash me unto the mast,
And if I shall bid you release me, commanding or earnestly praying,
Then shall ye bind me the faster, new fetters upon me laying.'
So did I tell them of all ; and they heard, and approved the
saying.

Kindly the fair wind blew, and the good ship scudded awhile :
Onward and onward she flew, till we came to the Sirens' Isle.
On a sudden the breath of the air was no more on the face of the
deep,

And the power of a God was there, soft-lulling the billows to sleep.
Then the sail in fold upon fold did we gather, and safely stowed
Down in the good ship's hold, and my shipmates cheerily rowed ;
And the churning of long sweeps made white foam on the roaring
brine. [fine ;

But a broad wax slab with my blade did I carve, and I shredded it
And I kneaded to softness the same with a masterful pressure
thereon ;

And it melted fast, for the flame of the Sun-god mightily shone.
 And my shipmates' ears did I smear, full cunningly sealing them
 fast, [mast;
 So that never a man might hear; and they bound me unto the
 Hands and feet they bound as I stood on the mast-step there;
 And the ropes went round and round the mast, and were lashed with
 care. [oars;
 And then to the stroke they bent, and the white foam flew from the
 And swiftly the black ship went, and we drew nigh unto the shores,
 So nigh, that the shout of a man might be heard; and the Witch-
 maids spied,
 And the spell of their singing began, clear-ringing across the tide :
 ' Come, pride of Achaia, Odysseus, draw nigh us ! 180
 Come, list to our chant, rest the oar from its rowing :
 Never yet was there any whose galley fled by us,
 But, sweet as the drops from the honeycomb flowing,
 Our voices enthralled him, and stayed his ongoing,
 And he passed from that rapture more wise than aforetime :
 For we know all the toil that in Troyland befell,
 When the will of the Gods was wrought out in the war-time :
 Yea, all that is done on the earth can we tell.'
 Sweetly the voices rang, and my heart exceedingly yearned
 To list to the lay that they sang; and mine eyes to my shipmates I
 turned, 190
 And I signed to them, ' Set me free ! ' but they bent to the oars,
 and rowed ;
 And across the ship unto me Perimede and Eurylochus strode ;
 And they made my bonds more fast, and they straitened me only
 the more,
 Until we had run clear past, and had left the enchanted shore.
 When the voice of the Sirens died in the distance, and that weird
 lay
 Failed over the sea-swell wide, then took my shipmates away [they.
 The fetters wherewith I was tied, and the wax from their ears took
 But as soon as the island was lost from our sight, we beheld a
 smoke
 And a surge of the sea high-tost, and a thunder of waters broke
 On the panic-struck ears of my crew; then clattered the oars and
 clashed 200
 From their paralysed hands as they flew, and adown the current they
 splashed. [aghast,
 With the sweep of the tapering blade broken off, and the oarsmen
 There was the ship's course stayed; but down through her length
 I passed, [cheer,
 And I stood by my shipmates; to each did I speak kind words of
 Rousing their hearts with my speech to a hope overmastering fear :
 ' Friends, we must yet know troubles; a little while yet endure !
 Surely this new tribulation is not so passing cure

As the day when the one-eyed giant pent us within his cave ;
 Yet thence could my wit and my counsel avail our lives to save ;
 And I ween all this shall be but a memory some bright day. 210
 Now therefore, my shipmates, as I shall command, let us all obey :
 Keep ye your seats on the benches, and smite the wild surf of the sea,
 If Zeus will vouchsafe that forth of destruction's jaws we may flee.
 Steersman, give heed,—thus I bid thee, thou lay up my words in
 thy soul, [control :

Seeing thine is the hand on the helm that the course of the ship doth
 Wide of this smoke of the spray and the seething billows' shock
 Keep thou with heed the galley, and head her still for the rock,
 Lest she suddenly sheer off yonder or ever thereof thou be ware,
 And thou into bale in a moment hurl us,—have thou a care !'

So did I speak, and they heard, and my hest they obeyed each
 one ; 220

But of Scylla I spake not a word,—since help against her was there
 none,— [power

Lest my mates, by the sudden affright terror-palsied, should have no
 To row, and down out of sight should essay in the hold to cower.

And then, ah then, I forgot the Enchantress's galling behest,

How she commanded me not to put armour about my breast :

But I did on my war-gear bright, and with two long spears in my
 hand, [stand ;

On the deck-planks ready for fight by the prow of the ship did I
 For on that quarter I weened that mine enemy first would appear,
 Scylla, the grim crag-fiend, bringing bane to my shipmates dear.

But she nowhere appeared to my sight, and I strained my aching
 gaze 230

At the cliff with its measureless height all mistily mantled in haze.

Up through the wild water-gorge did we sail, and we groaned with
 affright ; [might,

Here Scylla,—but yonder the surge where Charybdis, resistless in
 Terribly sucked to her chasms unfathomed the brine of the main ;

Upward with shudders and spasms mad-writhing she belched it
 again :

Seething abysses were roaring, as caldron o'er flames that is boiling,
 Leapt o'er the rock-crests upsoaring the foam from the frantic
 turmoiling.

Down as she whelmeth the wave doth a cavernous chasm reveal
 Gulfs where the water-whirls rave, deep calleth to deep, and there
 peal [240

Sea-thunders from cliff unto cliff, and the floor of the sea is in sight
 Swart with its slime : terror-stiff were my men, and all wan with
 affright. [struck stare :

On the jaws of destruction foam-gnashing we gazed with a horror—
 Suddenly Scylla down-flashing from out of the galley did tear
 Six of my shipmates ; she took even them which were mightiest of
 hand.

Even as I turned me to look, giving heed to the lives of my band,
All in a moment beheld I their feet and their hands up on high,
Swung up above ; and they yelled unto me with a heart-wringing
cry,

Calling in anguish on me by my name for the last time—the last !
Even as when on a sea-shelf a fisherman standeth, to cast
Baits to the fish for a snare, till the horn on the line therebelow 250
Shivering telleth that there is a victim that writhes to and fro :
Out of the sea to the shore as it quivers he whirleth it then ;
So did they writhe as she bore them aloft through the air to her den.
Then in her gates her teeth tare them : in screams they yielded
their breath, [death.

Stretched to me hands of despair from that hideous wrestle with
Oh, it was pitiful !—never mine eyes such a horror to me
Showed, mid all anguish that ever I suffered in tracking the sea.

And when we were clear of the roar of Charybdis, and Scylla's
Soon we sighted the shore of the isle of a God most fair. [lair,
There did the cattle browse of the Sun that treads heaven's steep,
Grand broad-fronted cows, and the flocks of his goodly sheep. [260
And over the tossing foam there came, in the ship as I lay,
A lowing of kine driven home to be housed at the close of the day,
And a bleating of sheep I heard ; then suddenly woke in my breast
Blind Teiresias' word, and Aæan Circê's behest, [again,—
Who had straitly bidden me shun,—yea, charging me once and
The isle of the God of the Sun, the giver of joy unto men.
Then, heart-sick with boding fear, my speech to my men I addressed :
' Shipmates, lend ye an ear, albeit by troubles oppressed,
To the words of the Theban seer, and Aæan Circê's behest ; 270
For they straitly have bidden us shun,—yea, charging me once and
again,—

The isle of the God of the Sun, the giver of joy unto men :
For there they foretold that ill, a terrible ill, should befall.
So speed we the black ship still, nor approach to the island at all.'

But their heart was nigh to break as the warning unwelcome they
And out Eurylochus spake, a bitter indignant word : [heard ;
' Beshrew thee, Odysseus, thou stubborn of soul and tireless of
frame, [is the same ?

Iron-limbed, iron-hearted !—what, dost thou deem that our strength
Nay, but with toil are we spent and forwearied with sleeplessness ;
And thou lettest us not set foot on the sea-girt island, to dress 280
Any savoury supper, but bidst that we wander all dismally
From the island away through the rushing night on the misty sea.
Yea, ship-destroying blasts from the womb of the darkness come ;
How should one 'scape from sheer destruction, who tempteth his
If perchance on the face of the sea a hurricane suddenly rose [doom,
With the wrath of the South-wind or West, the stormiest wind that
Winds that can shatter a ship in the very Gods' despite ? [blows,—
Nay, hearken we rather now to the high behest of the Night.

We will stay by the side of the galley, and only our supper prepare ;
With the dawn will we board her again and forth on the sea will we
fare.' 290

So he spake, and the rest of the crew there murmured approval
And then in my heart I knew that a God was plotting us ill ; [still ;
Yet my winged words answering flew, a little to curb their will :
' I am but one, ye are many ; lo, ye have the mastery.

Howbeit, come, all of you, swear a mighty oath unto me :
Swear, if on kine-drove or goodly flock of sheep we shall light,
None of you all in infatuate bale-bringing folly will smite
Either sheep or ox, but will peacefully all refrain you, and eat
Naught save the fare that immortal Circê gave for our meat.'

So did I speak, and each one of them lightly obeyed, nothing
loth. 300

And, so soon as the swearing was done, and they all had made end
of the oath,

In a sheltered cove did we bring to anchor the well-wrought keel ;
And there by a sweet fresh spring we made ready the evening meal.
But when they had eaten, and done with the craving for food, there
arose [thought of those

The remembrance of them that were gone ; and they wept as they
That out of the ship had been torn and by Scylla devoured ; and
they wept [they slept.

Till, in slumber forgetting to mourn, with the tears on their faces
Two parts of the night were gone, and the stars to their rest were
going, [blowing ;

When the Herder of clouds brought on us a wild wind mightily
And it waxed till a hurricane roared, and the masses of cloud on-
driven 310

O'er the land and the sea were poured, and night rushed down from
the heaven. [fair,

When low o'er the weltering wave glanced Dawn, rose-fingered and
We thrust far into a cave the galley, and moored her there.

There was the Nymphs' dance-floor, and the seats where they
wont to rest. [addressed :

And I gathered my men once more, and the last sad warning
' Friends, in the ship there is wine, there is meat in abundance for
Abstain we then from the kine, lest a terrible evil befall ; [all :
For the kine and the sheep are these of a God, and an awful one,
Of the Sun : all things he sees, and he hears whatsoever is done.'

So I spake, and my gallant crew gave ear with hearts consenting :
[320

But the South-wind stormily blew for a whole month, never re-
lenting :

It was ever the winds from the East and the South, and these alone.
But so long as my men could feast upon corn and wine of their own,
Desire was o'ermastered by dread, and they still from the kine
abstained ;

But after the wine and the bread were spent, we were even constrained,
[there,

Since the hunger within us was sore, to hunt for the scant game
Roaming the whole isle o'er, the birds and the fishes to snare.

Then a lonely pathway I trod, and went up through the island to
pray,

If haply some pitying God out of trouble would show me a way.

So across the island I went, having left my shipmates behind, 330

To a place where a high ridge lent a covert from that fierce wind.

And I washed mine hands, and there did I cry to the Dwellers in
Heaven;

And for all reply to my prayer sweet sleep unto me was given,

While Eurylochus unto his fellows an evil counsel addressed:

'Hearken to me, my mates, albeit by trouble oppressed:

Hateful is every shape of death unto wretched mortals; [portals.

But by famine most piteous is it to pass through the shadowy

Lo there the kine of the Sun;—the best of them all having driven,

We will offer them up to the Gods that dwell in the broad-arched
heaven.

But if unto Ithaca ever we come, to our fathers' land, 340

Straightway upreared by our hands a goodly temple shall stand

To the Sun, and therein will we lay for him offerings many and fair.

But and if in his wrath for his tall-horned kine he refuse to spare

Us and our galley, and none of the rest of the Gods will save,

Better, I say, in a moment to perish, agape to the wave,

Than slowly to pine and starve, with a desolate isle for a grave.'

So did he speak, and the rest commended the impious word.

And straightway they drove the best of the kine of the Sun-god's
herd

From anigh; for a little way from the galley they wont to browse;—
Stately and fair were they, the broad-browed, wreath-horned cows;—

[350

Then stood they around the beeves, and they prayed to the Gods on
high,

And they stripped the tender leaves of a tall-tressed oak thereby,

Because white barley was none to be found in the well-benched ship.

And after the prayer is done, they slay, and the skins they strip,

And the bones of the thighs cut out, and, doubly folding it over,

With the fat they wrap them about, and with pieces of flesh they
cover. [none,

And drawing them water they came, forasmuch as wine they had

And they poured on the altar-flame, and they roasted the entrails

And after the sacrifice and the tasting of entrails due, [thereon:

The rest into pieces they slice, and they run the long spits through.

[360

And then from mine eyelids the band of slumber was snatched away,

And I hied me to go to the strand, to the place where the swift ship
lay:

And the tall spar tumbled behind, and the tackle thereof was cast
Into the galley's well ; and the mast, as it sternwards crashed,
On the head of the steersman fell, and the bones of his skull were
smashed

All to a mass, and he, as a diver that springs from a height,
Dropt from the deck to the sea, and the soul from his bones took
flight. [hurled,

And with rolling and crashing of thunder the lightning of Zeus was
And the ship's whole length thereunder shivered, and round she
whirled 410

Filled with a sulphurous steam, and my men from her decks were
flung : [were swung

Like the white sea-mews did they seem as they hither and thither
Round the ship mid the foam and the swell, till the faces, a moment
tost, [was lost.

Sank, weighted with vengeance, to hell ; and the hope of their home
But I paced up and down the deck, till a sea burst over, and tore
The sides from the keel, and the wreck dismantled the wild surge
bore.

Snapd at the keel was the mast, and the twain swam side by side ;
But the backstay upon them was cast,—it was wrought of the tough
ox-hide :—

So I lashed the long spars fast together, and crouching on these
I was borne by the passionate blast through the welter of hungry
seas. 420

But the West-wind after a space no longer maddened the sea,
And the South-wind blew in its place, 'twas a terrible wind unto me ;
For backward it swept me, back, through a night of confusion and
fear,

Till I had remeasured my track, and Charybdis again was near.
And, just as the waters glowed to the east with a crimson flame,
Unto Scylla's rocky abode and to awful Charybdis I came :

Even then was she yawning asunder, but, lifted a moment on high,
Or ever the raft plunged under, I clutched at the wild fig by ;

And like to a bat I clung, and I groped with my feet around,
'Twixt heaven and earth as I hung, but foothold was none to be
found ; 430

For the roots were far away, and the branches floated and swayed,
Far-drooping and huge were they, and Charybdis was dark with
their shade.

Yet I clung with a desperate strain, till the gulf rebelching threw
The mast and the keel up again,—right welcome they came into view.
It was even the hour when away to his supper the deemster hies,
Who hath sat through the weary day mid the market's wrangling
cries,

When through hiss of the swirl and through spray of the whirl did
the beams uprise.

Then my limbs to the fall I gave, releasing my hold at the last ;

And I heavily plunged in the wave, just clearing the keel and the mast. [Charybdis was past. 440

So I climbed them, and paddling drave with mine hands till
But the Father of Gods and men did not suffer that Scylla should
see ;

For if she had looked forth then, swift doom had it been for me.

Nine days was I borne on the sea ; on the tenth, as the twilight
fell, [dwell

The Gods of their grace brought me to the island wherein doth
A Goddess majestic and fair, Calypso the beautiful-tressed,
Who loved me and cherished me there,—but why should I speak
of the rest ;

For I told thee thereof yestreen, and to tell it over again
Unto thee and thy stately queen were but irksome labour in vain."

BOOK XIII.

How *Odysseus* came back to his own land, and had counsel
and help of *Athene*.

THROUGH the shadowy halls all round was a hush—none murmured or stirred ; [that they heard,
And they sat as in trance, spell-bound by the charm of the tale
Till the voice of *Alcinous* woke, and across the silence he cried :
“*Odysseus*, now thou art come to my palace of brass-built pride,
My high-roofed hall, I trow thou shalt win to thine home at last,
Nor stray from the track any more, for all thy woes overpast.
But now let each of the princes obey this hest of mine,
All ye in mine halls that quaff the chieftains’ flame-flushed wine,
And list to the minstrel’s voice, and are merry of cheer evermore :
Lo now, in the polished chest hath the stranger goodly store 10
Of raiment and rich-wrought gold, and many a gift of price
Hitherward brought by *Phæacian* princes in council wise.
Come then, let us give him a caldron and tripod every one :
And we from the folk will gather, and so for our loss will atone ;
For ’tis hard when the weight of the welcoming falleth on one
So did *Alcinous* say, and the others were well content ; [alone.”
And away to their own homes they to their rest through the darkness went.

When the fingers rosy-red of the Dawn unveiled the day,
Down to the galley they sped, and the glorious brass brought they :
And *Alcinous*’ sacred might went over the galley then ; 20
And beneath the girders aright he stowed them, lest haply the men
Should be hindered thereby on the way as they plied the ashen
blade. [arrayed.
Then back to the halls went they, and there was the banquet
Then *Alcinous*’ sacred might offered up a stately bull
Unto him that dwelleth in night of clouds, and o’er all doth rule.
And when they had burnt the thighs, they turned to the banquet
of wine ;
And then did the hall-gee rise, and sang the minstrel divine,

Demodocus, honoured high :—but Odysseus was ever turning
His head unto where in the sky the sun hung glory-burning,
Languishing aye for the night, for he longed, for he longed to
return. 30

And even as a toil-weary wight for the hour of his supper doth
yearn, [furrows brown,

Whose steers all day have been dragging the share through the
And joyful is he when the lagging sun is at last gone down,

And to supper at last he may go, and his hurrying feet seem slow ;
So was Odysseus sore rejoiced to behold that sign ; [brine :

And straightway he spoke to the oar-loving folk, the sons of the
And chief to the king did he cry, and an eager word he spoke :

“ Lord King Alcinous, high-renowned among all earth-folk,

Pour oblations and send me away in peace ; and ye, farewell ;

For now are accomplished the things for the which my heart hath
been yearning, 40

Home-speeding and loving gifts ; may the Gods in the heavens that
dwell

Bless them to me ; my wife unstained may I find in returning,
In my home, and my friends well-faring and living sorrowless lives ;
And may ye that I leave behind deal bliss to your children and wives ;
Whatsoever things be the best may the Gods bestow on you all ;
May they grant that nothing of harm may e'er to the nation befall.”

So as he spake, all they commended it, giving advice
To send the stranger away, since the word he had uttered was wise.
And then to the henchman spoke the lord of Phæacia's folk :

“ Pontonous, mingle the bowl, and bear of the wine once more 50
To each several guest, that Zeus Allfather we now may implore,
And so may send the stranger away to his fatherland-shore.”

So the honey-heart wine was crowned ; and the henchman, to
each drawing nigh,

Bare to the guests all round, and they poured to the Gods on high ;
From their seats to the Blesséd they poured that abide in the
Heaven-dome broad.

But rose and stood by the board Odysseus like to a god.

And the double-chalice cup did he place her hands between,

As the hero lifted up his voice, and spake to the queen :

“ O Queen, farewell ; be happiness thine evermore till thou come
Unto eld and a sunset-glorious threshold of all men's home. 60

And now must I go, but have thou joy in bower and at board,
Encompassed with praise of the people, and love of thy children
and lord.”

Then over the threshold went Odysseus the godlike wight ;

And with him a herald was sent by Alcinous' sacred might,

To lead to the way to the strand, where the swift ship rode by the
sea ; [three ;

And there went, by Arêtê's command, along with him handmaids
And the first a fair white vest and a flowing mantle bare ;

And the second brought on the chest strong-wrought, with the
treasures there ; [wine.

And the third of the maidens bore the bread and the rose-flushed
So when they were come to the shore and the dash of the hoary
brine, 70

The crew of the galley straight received of the maidens their load,
And the precious treasure-freight and the victual below they stowed ;
And they made for Odysseus a bed on the deck-planks heedfully ;
Carpets and linen they spread, that his rest unbroken might be.

Then aboard did the hero go, and silently down he lay :

And along the thwarts arow all orderly ranged were they ;

And the hawser loose they cast from the stone wherethrough it was
passed ; [the oar.

And they bent to the stroke, and they tore the white surf up with
Then the dews of a dreamless sleep o'er his weariful eyelids streamed ;
Most sweet, unbroken and deep, and likest to death it seemed. 80

And, as all together dash four stallions over the plains

At the touch of the whistling lash, at the toss of the glancing reins,
And they bound through the air, and they fly, as upborne on the
wings of the wind,

So was the stern tossed high as the good ship leapt, and behind

Rushing the dark wave sped of the manifold-roaring sea ;

And unswervingly onward she fled : so swiftly, so surely went she,
Not the falcon could match her, whose flight is the fleetest of all
things that fly, [high,

So fast did she cleave and so light she rode over the waves tossing

As onward the hero she bore who in wisdom was like to a god,

Who had suffered affliction before, heart-troubles, a weariful load, 90

In battles of warring men, and on waves of the troublous sea :

Yet peaceful slept he then, from their very remembrance free.

Now overhead hung the bright broad star, forerunner of morn,

The chief of the heralds of light, ere breaks from her mist-bed the
Dawn ; [shore.

And now was the galley come nigh to the wave-washed Ithacan

Now a certain haven doth lie,—'tis of Phorcys the sea-god hoar,—

On Ithaca's coast, and thereby are cliffs upon either side,

Seaward-jutting and high, and they couch by the guarded tide ;

And they shelter the smooth-swelling wave from the winds that
bluster and rave ; [ride 100

But the well-benched galleys within the sheer rock-rampart may
Unanchored ; if once they win to the harbour, secure they abide.

By the wash of the innermost wave is an olive, a silvery cloud ;

And thereby is a lovely cave which the cool deep shadows shroud.

And the place is a hallowed spot to the Nymphs of the fountain-
stream ;

And pitchers and bowls through the grot in living marble gleam ;

And the bees build there, and their wings make the air as a
murmurous dream.

And looms exceeding tall of stone for the Nymphs are there,
 And thereon do they weave the pall sea-purple, wondrous fair.
 And fountains are there everflowing ; and two doors lead thenceforth,
 The one is for men's downgoing, and faceth the sunless north ; 110
 But the other, a track whereupon no man's foot ever hath trod,
 Light-paved by the noonday sun, lieth fair for the feet of a God.

So there did they speed to the land in the twilight, the land that
 they knew ;

And the galley high on the strand the half of her keel's length threw,
 So good were the oarsman-band before whose strokes she flew.
 Then down did the shipmen leap from the gallant keel to the shore ;
 And out of the well-girt ship the slumbering hero they bore
 With his bed ; for to linen and gay bright rugs did they set their
 hands ;

And softly there did they lay him, by sleep overborne, on the sands.
 And they brought the shining store that the sea-kings gave, ere he
 parted 120

To go to his fatherland-shore, through Athenê the mighty-hearted.
 And the goodly-gleaming array did they range 'neath an olive-tree,
 Aloof from the trodden way, lest any should pass and see,
 And the precious treasure steal, or ever Odysseus woke.

Then for home did they launch the keel, and flashed the long swift
 stroke. [ings still

But Poseidon, the Earthshaker dread, remembered his threaten-
 That he hurled at Odysseus' head ; and he asked of the Thunderer's
 will : [heaven,

" Allfather, where shall my worship be found mid the Deathless in
 I, unto whom by the deathlings honour no more is given,
 I, whom the Phæacians flout, men sprung of mine own high strain ?
 For in sooth I said that Odysseus should suffer manifold pain [130
 Ere he came to his home ; yet I thought not wholly to take away
 His return, since first thou hadst sworn and promised his home-
 coming day.

But over the sea have they borne him lapped in slumber's fold,
 And have set him in Ithaca safe, and have given him gifts untold,
 Marvels of woven raiment, and stores of brass and of gold,
 More than Odysseus from Ilium ever had carried away,
 Scatheless had he come thence with his own full share of the prey."

Answering spake to the Lord of the sea-tide Zeus, Cloud-king :
 " O mighty Shaker of Earth, that thou shouldst say this thing ! 140
 How should the Dwellers in Heaven do dishonour to thee,
 To thee, the eldest and noblest of all in Olympus that be ?
 But if any of men, puffed up with his strength, and in pride of his
 might,

Denieth thee worship, such deeds evermore is it thine to requite :
 Deal with them even as thy heart doth command, and as seemeth
 thee right."

Then vengeance-athirst the Shaker of Earth cried sternly aloud :

" Soon would I do as thou sayest, O shrouded in darkness of cloud ;
But ever I stand in fear of thee, and in dread of thy wrath.

Lo, now am I fain to smite amidst of her homeward path
Out on the misty sea the fair Phæacian ship ; 150

And never again shall they speed any stranger over the deep,
When a monstrous hill hath o'ershadowed their town with its
measureless heap." [addressed :

Answered the Herder of Clouds, and the Shaker of Earth
" O loved of my soul, unto mine heart thus doth it seem to be best :
When all the folk of the city are watching it nearing the strand,
Be it straightway transformed to a rock and riveted nigh to the land,
Still in a swift ship's likeness, and so shall they marvel all ;
And the shroud of a mighty mountain about their city shall fall."

So when the Earth-shaker dread had heard Allfather's decree,
Swift to Phæacia he sped, to the people that dwell by the sea. 160
There did Poseidon bide, and fleetly the galley flew

Standing in from the outsea wide ; but the Earth-shaker nigh to her
drew, [stone,

And with flat hand striking he smote her, and turned the ship to a
And rooted her there to the spot,—and behold, the God was gone.
But the people beheld from the shore, and each unto other cried
The folk that deal with the oar and the galley, the sea-king's pride ;
And each 'gan shout, as he turned him about unto those at his side :
" O look !—the galley !—now who hath fettered her there in the sea,
Even as she stood in shoreward, and full in sight was she ?"

But they knew not the thing that was done, and in wildered amaze
each spoke ; 170

Till the old king looked thereon, and he cried in the midst of the folk ;
" O, now to me cometh a long-spoken prophecy heard from the lips
Of my sire, how Poseidon, angered against us because of our ships,
Which bear all comers unscathed to the haven wherein they would
be,

Would smite a galley of ours one day in the misty sea,
As it homeward returned from some such errand across the deep,
And a monstrous hill should o'ershadow our town with its measure-
less heap.

So ran the greybeard's tale ; the fulfilment is on us this day !
But come now, as I shall command, let all the people obey :
Refrain ye from this home-speeding of whatso mortals shall come 180
To our city, and offer the Sea-God a chosen hecatomb,
Twelve bulls ; if so be he will lay his fierceness of anger down,
And the mountain uplift not its measureless height for a shroud of
our town." [fice :

He spake, and their souls were afraid, and they hasted the sacri-
And so to Poseidon they prayed, and the altar-smoke 'gan rise
From the midst of Phæacia's folk, and her captains and lords of
renown. [down.

And Odysseus the godlike woke where asleep they had laid him

In the land of his fathers he lay, yet strange did it seem unto him,
 Who had long dwelt far away ; and a mist-veil's glamour dim [190
 Did Athenê around him shed, that the hero might seem as a stranger,
 And a timely word be said of the Goddess, a warning of danger,
 That his wife might know him not, nor his friends, nor the citizens,
 Till the hero's hands should have wrought for the suitors a recom-
 pense.

So to him did all things seem far other than so as they were,
 The pathways' far white gleam, and the havens opening fair,
 And the towering crags and steep, and the woodland's billows of
 green ; [scene,—

And straight to his feet did he leap, and he wailed as he stared at the
 For he knew not his fatherland,—and he smote upon either thigh
 In his grief with a passionate hand, and he cried with a bitter cry :
 " Ah me, what land is this ? amidst what people am I ? 200
 Are they savage and ruthless men, a justice-scorning kind,
 Or a guest-loving folk, that beareth the fear of the Gods in mind ?
 O where shall I store my treasures, and where shall my footsteps
 stray ?

Ah to have tarried amidst the Phæacians far away !
 Then to another king, some strong war-lord, had I come,
 Who had given me kindly welcome, and safely had sped me home.
 But now do I know not where I may hide my treasures away ;
 Yet I may not leave them here, lest others should make them a prey.
 Shame on the captains and lords of Phæacia's folk, for in sooth
 Nor wisdom nor justice they know, nor the sacred lips of truth ! 210
 To an alien land have they borne me, who promised over the main
 To bear me to Ithaca's sun-glow strand—their promise was vain !
 May the God of the suppliant requite them, Zeus Allfather, whose
 ken

Comprehendeth all, and who dealeth his vengeance on sins of men !
 Go to, let me count my possessions, and see if aught hath been taken
 By them whose hollow galley hath left me here forsaken."

He spake, and he numbered them o'er, the bowls, fair gifts of kings,
 The tripods, the golden store, and the lovely woven things.
 And there lacked not one to his hand : but then for his home mourned
 he,

Creeping along the strand of the manifold-seething sea, 220
 With moanings many and sore : but Athenê drew nigh unto him,
 And the form of a youth she bore, as a shepherd of sheep did she
 seem ;

And as king's sons wont to be was she tender and sweet to behold,
 And a well-woven cloak bare she on her shoulders in fold over fold ;
 And sandals gleamed on her bright smooth feet, and a javelin she
 bare.

And Odysseus was fain of the sight, and he went to meet her there ;
 And he lifted his voice, and sped the light-winged words, and he said :
 " O friend, for that thou art the first that I hap in this place to find,

All hail unto thee ; and approach me not with an evil mind ! [230
 Nay, save these things and me : lo, I put up my prayer unto thee,
 As a man doth pray to a God ; and a suppliant I bow at thy knee.
 Now answer me soothly this, to the end I may know it well,—
 What land is this, and who be the people therein that dwell ?
 Is it a far-seen isle, or a beach of the mainland shore
 Whose deep rich meads slope down to the sea-waves' ceaseless roar ?”

Then did Athenê the grey-eyed answer the hero and say :
 “ Witless thou art, O stranger, or comest from far away,
 That thou askest of this land's name : it is not thus nameless, I trow,
 Nor fameless, this land whereof full many a man doth know, [240
 Even all that dwell in the Dawn-land beneath the sun's bright way,
 And all that be far-withdrawn to the west, and the mist-land grey.
 It is rugged enow ; no place where the car-borne heroes ride :
 Yet the land is good, but from sea unto sea is it nowise wide.
 And wealth of corn untold and of wine thereto is given ;
 Nor ever the rain fails there, nor the nourishing dew of heaven ;
 And the goat-kind thrive and the kine increase therein, and there
 grow

All manner of trees of the wood, and the fountains stintless flow.
 Stranger, Ithaca's name hath reached to the Trojan land,
 Though far away it lieth, they say, from Achaia's strand.”

So spake she ; and fain of the word was Odysseus the worn with
 toil, 250
 And was merry in that he heard that this was his fatherland-soil,
 As Pallas Athenê said, the child of the Aegis-lord ;
 And he lifted his voice, and sped from his lips the light-winged word ;
 Yet he spake the thing that was not, and he turned it in soothless
 wise,

For ever his crafty thought would be shaping him helpful lies :
 “ Ithaca—yea, I have heard of it even in Crete the wide,
 Far overseas ; and now myself have hitherward hied
 With this wealth, yea and as much with my children doth yet remain :
 Thence fled I, because that Idomeneus' well-loved son I had slain—
 Orsilochus swift of foot, the man that in all wide Crete 260
 Was the best of the sons of the land in the speed of his flying feet—
 Because he would fain have robbed me of all my Trojan spoil
 That I won with travail of spirit and manifold sorest toil,
 As whiles I battled with heroes, and whiles with the troublous sea,
 Because that I would not stoop me his father's henchman to be
 In the land of Troy, but was chief over comrades that followed me.
 As homeward he hied from the field I lay in wait by the way
 With a comrade, and hurled the spear ; and dead on the earth he lay.
 And the pall of the black dark night was drawn over heaven, and
 none

Saw us, and ere he was ware the deed of mine hand was done. 270
 So when I had slain my foe with the brazen spear's sharp stroke,
 Seaward I went, to a ship of the haughty Phœnician folk.

And I prayed them, and gave them as much as they would of my booty-store

And bade them bear me away and land me on Pylos' shore,
Or in Elis the sacred, wherein the Epeian men bear sway;
But in sooth the might of the wind from that coast drave them away.
They meant not to cheat me, but sorely loth, in their own despite
Thence were they drifted and wandered, and hither we came in the night;

And into the haven with toil we rowed, and none took heed
Of supper, so faint were we, though sore was the body's need; 280
But even as we landed, down on the strand did we drop and lie;
And sweet sleep came on me there, for that all forwearied was I.
And all my possessions out of the hollow ship took they,
And they laid them down beside me where on the sands I lay;
And they boarded the ship, and to Sidon the fair-built city departed.
But I, I was left alone, forlorn and heavy-hearted."

But a light smile-ripple ran o'er her lips, and her grey eyes gleamed.
With her hand she caressed the man; and lo, as a woman she seemed,
As a woman stately and fair, and in lovely loom-work skilled;
And she lifted her voice, and there through his heart her winged words thrilled: 290

"O shrewd would he be and a crafty knave, who would outwit thee
In manifold wiles, though a God should meet thee in rivalry!
O shiftful, insatiate of guile, it was not in thee to refrain
From deceit, not though thou wast come to thy fatherland-soil again;
And to part from cheating words, thine old tried friends, art thou loth;—

Come, talk we thus no longer, for cunning of heart are we both,
Seeing that thou art the best of all men on earth that be found,
In weaving of counsel and word-weft, and I mid the Gods am renowned

In wisdom and helpful craft; but thou, thou didst not know
Pallas Athenè, the daughter of Zeus, who am wont to go 300
Ever beside thee in toil and in danger to aid and defend:
Yea, and 'twas I unto all the Phæacians who made thee a friend.
Now too am I hitherward come with intent to weave with thee
A counsel-web, and to hide the wealth that the folk of the sea
Gave thee when homeward thou wentest,—'twas I that moved them thereto,—

And to tell thee all the woes that thy weird must bring thee through
In thy fair-built halls. Thou canst not escape them; be strong to bear.
But to no one of all, not of men nor of women, do thou declare
How that back thou hast wandered; but silently suffer thy manifold pain, [refrain." 310

And stoop 'neath the outrage of men, and a little from vengeance
And Odysseus the manifold-counselled made answer to her in turn:
"Goddess, 'tis hard for the mortal that meeteth thee, thee to discern,
Be he never so wise, for that every shape canst thou take upon thee.

But this thing well I know, that of old thou wert gracious to me,
 What time the Achæans' sons in Troy-land wont to fight.
 But when we had wasted the city of Priam, the town high-pight,
 And went in the ships, and a God's wrath scattered the war-host wide,
 Never thereafter beheld I the Daughter of Zeus, nor espied
 Thee setting foot on my ship to defend me from trouble and bane ;
 But, bearing within me ever a heart sore smitten with pain, 320
 I wandered on, till the Gods from my evils set me free,
 Till in the Phæacians' goodly land thou camest to me
 With words of cheer, and into the city thyself didst bring.
 But now by thy Sire I beseech thee,—for sorely I doubt this thing,
 That in deed and in truth I am come unto far-seen Ithaca,—nay,
 I am yet in another land ; and I ween that thou dost say
 All this but to mock me, and cheat my heart with a phantom of
 home,—

Oh tell me if I to the dear-loved land of my fathers am come."

Answering spake unto him the grey-eyed Goddess divine :
 " Ay, even so evermore is the thought in that bosom of thine. 330
 Therefore I cannot forsake thee, how burdened soever with ill,
 For that words never fail thee nor wit, and thou holdest the reins
 of thy will.

Now any man else, who had come from wandering, joyfully
 Had rushed, the faces of children and wife in his halls to see.
 But thou carest not to know nor enquire of these, until
 Of thy wife thou hast made sure trial : she verily sitteth still
 Alone in thine halls, and misery-haunted weareth away
 In tears and in sickness of hope deferred her night and her day.
 Now this thing never I doubted, but held my confidence fast,
 That, though thy companions were lost, yet thou wouldst return at
 the last. 340

But against Poseidon, my father's brother, loth was I to fight.
 Against thee in his heart had he laid up a store of rancour and spite,
 Being wroth that his well-loved son thou didst of sight bereave.
 Go to, I will show thee thine Ithacan home, that thou mayest
 believe.

This is the haven of Phorcys, the Ancient of the Sea ;
 And lo at the head of the haven the spreading olive-tree ;
 And hard thereby is the lovely cave where the cool shadows cling,
 A sacred haunt of the Nymphs that hight the Maids of the Spring ;
 And here is the vaulted cavern whereunto thou usedst to come
 And offer the Nymphs full many a perfect hecatomb ; 350
 And this is the mountain Neritus, mantled with forest gloom."

So speaking the Goddess dispelled the mist, and the landskip was
 seen.

Right glad at the thing he beheld was the toil-worn hero, I ween ;
 And he joyed to look on his land, and he kissed the kind earth there ;
 And he lifted the suppliant hand, and put up to the Nymphs his
 prayer :

"Nymphs of the well-spring, daughters of Zeus, I had thought till That I never should see you again; but now with loving vow [now I hail you; yea, and your gifts, as in days overpast, will I give, If the Prey-giver, daughter of Zeus, of her grace will grant me to live, And foster my dear-loved son, in his father's steps to tread." 360

Answering him the grey-eyed Goddess Athenê said:

"Be thou of good cheer, let this in thy spirit trouble thee not: But straightway now in a cleft far back in the mighty grot Let us store thy treasures, safely there for a while to abide; Then take we counsel so that the best may hereafter betide."

So speaking she entered the grot, the vast dim-shadowed cave; There hiding-places she sought, and Odysseus bare and gave To her hand his treasures all, gold, brass with flawless gleam, And lovely-woven pall, that the sea-kings gave unto him. And these she wisely stored; and a stone on the cave's mouth laid 370 The child of the Aegis-lord, Athenê the warrior-maid.

Then they twain sat them beside the sacred olive's root, And devised how the suitors' pride should bear to them death for fruit. And thus the grey-eyed Goddess Athenê began her rede:

"O Zeus and Laertes' seed, Odysseus shiftful at need, Think how thou mayst lay thine hands on the shameless suitors at last, Who have lorded it over thy palace now these three years past, And are wooing thy wife, and are fain with their gifts to win her But ever her heart is aching sorely for sight of thy face; [grace; And she leadeth on all to hope, and message on message hath sent, 380 Promising this man and that; yet other is her intent."

Made answer to her the manifold-counselled Odysseus, and cried: "Lo now! and in very sooth as the son of Atreus died, So was I like in my palace by evil fate to fall, [me of all. Except thou, Goddess, hadst shown me the truth and hadst warned Come, weave me some counsel, whereby to requite them after their deed;

And stand thou by me, and dauntless spirit breathe for my need, As thou didst when we rent Troy's glittering battlement-veil away. Ah wouldst thou stand by me so, Grey-eyed, in the coming day! Yea, Goddess, three hundred men would I in battle abide, 390 If thou of thy grace wouldst aid, in thy might wouldst stand by my side."

Unto him made answer the Goddess, Athenê the grey-eyed spake: "Yea, I will surely be with thee, of thee good heed will I take, What time we set hand to the work; and I ween that with brains and Shall many a man bespatter thy great hall's mighty floor, [gore Many a suitor, devourer of substance not his own.

But now will I make thee to be unto all that shall see thee unknown; I will wrinkle the beautiful skin that wrappeth thy limbs about, And destroy thy golden hair from thine head, and cast such a clout O'er thy shoulders that whoso beholdeth shall loathe the wretch that doth wear, 400

And those thine eyes will I blear that erst were passing-fair,
 To make thee appear in unseemly guise to the suitors all,
 Yea, to thy wife, and the son thou didst leave in thy palace-hall.
 But thou, first go to thine herder of swine that abideth afield,
 And, as in the days gone by, unto thee is loyal-willed,
 And thy son and thy wife Penelopê wise of heart doth he love.
 Thou shalt find him abiding beside thy swine, where feedeth the
 drove

By the Raven's Rock and the spring Arethusa's mossy brink ;
 And they eat the abundant mast, and the shadow-gloomed water
 they drink,

Such food as maketh the swine well-liking and goodly-grown. 410
 There tarry at hand, and inquire, and all things so shall be known,
 Till to Sparta the city of beautiful women myself shall have gone,
 To call Telemachus thence, thy well-beloved son,
 Who hath hied him to wide Lacedæmon to ask after tidings of thee,
 If perchance Menelaus can tell him if anywhere living thou be."

Spake unto her many-counselled Odysseus answering :
 " But wherefore didst thou not tell him, who knowest everything ?
 Was it only to cause him to roam the salt sea's harvestless floods,
 Suffering toil and pain, while others devour his goods ? "

Made answer the Goddess to him, and Athenê the grey-eyed
 spake : 420

" Nay, but thou needest not, thou, to disquiet thine heart for his sake.
 Thither I brought him myself, that goodly renown he might win
 Of his journey : no trouble hath he, but Atreides' palace within
 He sitteth at quiet, and measureless plenty before him is laid.
 But his foes with a long black galley are lurking in ambuscade,
 Thinking to slay him, ere back to his fatherland-soil he be come ;
 But I ween it shall not so fall, or ever the grave hold some,
 Even some of the suitors, of them that devour thy goods in thine
 home." [ed the man ;

When the Goddess had ended her say, with her wand she touch-
 And the fair smooth skin straightway on his limbs into wrinkles
 ran ; 430

And she ruined the golden glory of hair from his goodly head ;
 And the shrivelled skin of a hoary sire o'er his limbs she spread ;
 And his eyes, so bright erewhile, she bleared, that their beauty
 was hid ;

And the clout most loathly-vile of a tunic upon him she did,
 Filthy, a tattered rag, and with smoke all grimy to view ;
 And the great bare hide of a stag fleet-footed about him she threw :
 And a staff for his steps she lent, and a wallet, a thing forlorn,
 Foul, and with many a rent, by a twisted cord upborne.

So counselled, so parted the twain ; and now is Athenê gone
 Unto Sparta, the holy plain, to find Odysseus' son. 440

BOOK XIV.

How Odysseus tarried in the hut of the swineherd.

BUT he from the haven went, where the rugged pathway led
Over the woody bent, unto where Athenê had said
The swine-droves went to feed with the godlike man, who best
To the goods of his lord gave heed of the thralls that Odysseus
possessed. [wall,

By the house-front sitting he found him, there where the courtyard
In a place with a clear view round about, was builded tall,
Massy and fair to behold: it was reared by the swineherd's hand,
The swine therein to fold, while his king was afar from his land.
The queen knew not, neither old Laertes, the hero-sire,
How he built it with huge stones rolled, and wattled the gaps with
briar: 10

And he planted a palisade thereabout, on the right and the left,
Stakes many and close-arrayed, dark heart of the oak-trunk cleft.
And within the guarded space there were swine-pens two and ten,
The swine-kind's resting-place, close-set, and in every pen
Were fifty couchers on earth pent, breeding swine were they;
But without the wall of the garth the boars through the night-tide
lay.

Far fewer by tale were these, for the suitors minished them still,
Recklessly feasting at ease, and the swineherd bent to their will,
That he brought them the goodliest each day of the boars huge-fed,
So that much was consumed; yet the rest were three hundred and
three-score head. [that slept,

And, for nightlong guards of the fold, there were hounds thereby
Fierce, gaunt, like beasts of the wold, which the swineherd-captain
kept.

And he from the hide of a steer was shaping him sandals then,
As the hero drew anear; but all the rest of the men
This way and that way had hied, as the herded swine-kind went,
Even three, and one beside to the town had the swineherd sent,
Thither to drive the beasts perforce for the suitors proud,

To be slain for the riotous feasts of the overweening crowd.
 All in a moment the hounds saw Odysseus, and on him they ran
 Barking, with furious bounds; but the shift-devising man 30
 From his hand the staff let fall, and he sat on the ground straight-
 way.

By his own farm-garth and stall had he shamefully fared that day,
 But the swineherd suddenly spied, and with hurrying feet upstartèd :
 Straight dropped from his hand the hide as out through the porch-
 way he darted;

And he shouted in master-tone, and the scattering hounds fled away,
 As he drave them with stone upon stone; and then to the king did
 he say :

“ Father, a little more, and the bandogs suddenly [on me.
 Had rent thee, and then hadst thou poured the reproach thereof up-
 Yet it needs not : the Gods have heaped me a measure of anguish
 and moan ;

For aye for a godlike king am I sitting in grief and groan ;
 And I feed the goodly boars of his flock for others to eat ;
 And he the while, I ween, is pining for lack of meat,
 As mid folk and town of an alien land he must wearily stray,
 If indeed he yet be alive, and behold the light of the day.
 But come, to the hut let us go, old sire, that thou too there
 Mayest fill thy soul with the wine and the meat of the shepherd's
 fare, [clare.”

And whence thou art come mayest tell, and all thy troubles de-
 Into the hut as he spake the godlike swineherd led ; [spread ;
 And a brushwood pile did he take, and a seat for his guest he
 And he laid to cover the heap a wild goat's shaggy fell, 50
 Broad, thick, whereon to sleep, and it liked Odysseus well,
 That welcome given to a guest ; and even with the thought he said :
 “ Stranger, may Zeus, and the rest of the deathless dwellers in
 heaven

Grant thee thy dearest wish for thy welcome kindly given.”

And thou, Eumæus, the swineherd, madest reply to the king :
 “ Though a viler than thou came, stranger, that were an impious
 thing,

To scorn the stranger, seeing the poor and the strangers all
 Are sent of Zeus; and the gift that we give, what though it be
 small,

Is blessèd and welcome : little in sooth to bestow hath the thrall ;
 For ever he standeth in fear over whom young lords bear sway. 60
 Ah, but the Gods have taken from him his home-coming day,
 Who had shewed me kindness, I ween, and had given me substance
 enow,

Such as a kindly king is wont on his thrall to bestow,
 A home and a parcel of ground, and a dear-loved wife long sought,
 When the Gods have blessed his hands, and the true work honestly
 wrought,

As prospereth this my toil, to the which evermore I give heed.
 If my king were but here growing old, he would give me my labour's meed. [then

He hath perished—and O that abasement and death had come ere
 To the house of Helen, who brought low hosts of valiant men!
 For he too went overseas at King Agamemnon's need, 70
 To fight with the Trojan folk in the land of the battle-steed."

Swift he upgathered and tied his tunic about with his belt;
 And forth to the pens hath he hied where the folk of the swine-kind dwelt: [slew:
 Thence hath he chosen him twain, and he brought them forth and
 He hath singed them and carved, and hath ta'en the spits and
 thrust them through:

And he roasted it all, and bare on the spits, as hissing it glowed,
 To the hero the savoury fare, and meal thereover he strowed;
 And the honey-sweet wine he poured, and mingled in ivy bowl;
 And facing his guest at the board he spake, to cheer his soul:
 "Eat now, O stranger, of this, for such is the fare of the thrall; 80
 But the flesh of the boars must go to the suitors' banqueting-hall,
 Who regard not the wrath of the Gods, and of pity they take no
 heed:

Yet I ween are the blessed Gods no lovers of lawless greed; [deed.
 But they have respect unto justice, they honour the rightful
 Yea, even the wild sea-rovers, the foes of man, that live
 On the substance of other folk, and the spoil that Zeus doth give,—
 As they speed the laden galleys over the sea-ridges home,
 Some shadow of haunting dread doth over their fierce hearts come.
 But these men—surely they know, yea, the Gods have sent them a
 word

Of his woeful end, for they lawlessly woo the wife of my lord, 90
 Refusing to get them gone, and they revel in riotous ease,
 And as tyrants spoil his goods, nor heed nor shame have these.
 For, ever as pass the days of Zeus, and the nights wear on,
 They are slaughtering beasts, and it is not one, neither two alone;
 And they pour out the wine, and they waste it with insolence
 overbold.

Ah, great was his substance aforetime, the sum thereof untold!
 There be none of the heroes, none on the black-loamed mainland-
 shore

So rich, nor in Ithaca's self: though there came together a score,
 Were the wealth of them all as his; lo, now will I tell it thee o'er:
 Twelve herds on the mainland he hath, and as many flocks of
 sheep, 100

And of forest-ranging swine, and of goats that tread the steep:
 He hath hirelings and herdmen-folk of his own to tend them and
 keep:

And eleven goat-flocks in the uttermost part of the island feed,
 And over them trusty men keep watch and ward with heed.

And of these each taketh a fatted goat, and day after day
 The best of all the flock to the suitors are led away.
 Yea, and moreover the swine that thou seest I guard and tend ;
 And the best of the herd must I choose with heed, and thitherward
 send."

And Odysseus feasting heard, but he stinted not for the tale,
 And he drank, and he spake not a word : but he plotted the suitors'
 bale. 110

But when he had supped, and his soul of the food gat strengthening,
 Filling his drinking-bowl, the swineherd gave to the king :
 And the bubbles gleamed at the brim ; so he drank, and his heart
 grew light.

Then spake the hero to him, and sped the winged word-flight :
 " Now tell me who is thy lord, and the name whereby they call
 The mighty man of wealth who bought thee, friend, for his thrall.
 For King Agamemnon's honour he died,—so ran thy word ? [lord.
 Tell me : perchance it may hap I have known such a man as thy
 For Zeus Allfather, I ween, and the rest of the Deathless know
 If aught I can tell of the man, for far have I roved to and fro." 120

Answered and spake the swineherd-captain, lord of the herd :
 " Old man, no wandering wight that cometh and bringeth word
 Of him, shall his wife believe, nor his well-belovèd son.
 But with empty lies on their tongues come vagrants many a one ;
 They reck not, they, of the truth, but they crave to feast of our
 store.

And every vagabond knave that cometh to Ithaca's shore
 Forthwith to my lady hies him away, and babbles deceit ;
 And she welcometh kindly, and biddeth the liar new lies repeat.
 And the tears from her eyelids fall, as she mourns through the
 sorrowful day,

As women are wont, when husbands perish far away. 130
 Thou, too, old man, I fear me, wouldst fashion a tale as the rest,
 If one would reward thy story with guerdon of mantle or vest.
 Ah no, but the dogs have torn him, the birds have come to the
 prey,

And have rent his skin from his bones, for his spirit hath fled away,
 Or fish in the sea have devoured him : his naked bones on the
 strand

Are lying forlorn, enwrapped in a winding-sheet of sand.
 He is lost ; and of troubles he leaveth a heritage dreary behind,
 Unto all his friends, and most unto me, for I never shall find,
 Whithersoever I go, another king so kind ; [more, 140
 Not though to the house of my father and mother I turned once
 The home where first I breathed and was nursed in the days of yore.
 I mourn not them so much, though I long with yearning sore
 To behold them again with mine eyes, and the home on a far-away
 shore :

But mine heart with desire for Odysseus the lost is nigh to break.

Ah stranger, he is not here, yet his name with awe do I speak.
 For he loved me well, and he cared with a kindly heart for me :
 And ever I call him my lord and my love, afar though he be."

Then unto him made answer Odysseus the troubled-tried :
 " Friend, thou art sure, good sooth, and will hear of naught beside,
 But that never will he return, and thy spirit will nowise believe. 150
 Yet this will I not say lightly, an oath thereto will I give,
 That Odysseus shall surely return ; and be this my tidings' meed :
 In the selfsame hour that he cometh again to his home indeed,
 Then do on me beautiful raiment, a mantle and tunic-vest ;
 Till then will I not receive them, albeit of need hard-pressed.
 For hateful to me is he as the very gates of the grave,
 Who, cowed by poverty, fleeth to lies, the shield of the slave.
 Bear witness Zeus, above all the Gods, and the guest-fain board,
 And the hearth whereunto I am come of Odysseus thy princely lord,
 That surely in all these things shall the truth of my words be shown.
 In this year, even in this, shall Odysseus come to his own : [160
 As the one moon waneth away and the next moon cometh on, [done
 He shall come to his halls with a recompense stern for all that have
 Dishonour here to his wife, and his gallant glorious son."

Then unto him did Eumæus the swineherd answering say :
 " Old man, sooth never shall I such good-news-guerdon pay, [ease,
 And Odysseus shall never come home : but drink thou on at thine
 And commune we of other things, but make no mention of these.
 For keen as a stab to the heart in my bosom cometh the word,
 Whensoever one nameth the lost, Odysseus my dear-loved lord. 170
 Nay, we will none of thine oaths,—yet O might my king come again,
 That the Queen and I might look on the day for the which we are
 And Laertes the old and the godlike Telemachus joy thereat ! [fain,
 But unceasingly now do I mourn for the son that Odysseus begat,
 Telemachus : him did the Gods rear up for a goodly plant ;
 And I deemed that amidst the heroes nothing the son should want
 Of the might of his well-loved sire, of his grace and his goodlihead ;
 But now hath one of the Deathless his soul for his ruin misled,
 Or belike some man : he is gone unto Pylos' sacred strand
 For news of his sire ; and now do the arrogant suitor-band 180
 Lie in wait for his home-coming feet, with intent that Arkeisius' race
 May utterly fail, and his name may in Ithaca find no place.
 But speak we of him no more : it may be they will take the prey,
 Or Kronion will stretch out his hand for his shield in the perilous day.
 But thou, old man, speak now of thyself, and thy troubles tell,
 And answer the truth unto me, to the end I may know it well :
 Who art thou, and whence among men ? thy city and parents declare.
 In what manner of ship didst thou come, and how did the shipmen
 bear

Thee unto Ithaca's shore ? What land do they boast for their own?
 —For I doubt thou hast scarcely come hitherward faring on foot
 and alone."

Unto him made answer Odysseus the full of devices, and spake :
 " Touching all these things unto thee an answer of truth will I make.
 Had we but now good store of meat for many a day,
 And of wine, and here in the hut might while the hours away,
 Feasting at quiet, while others should toil and our burden bear,
 I would then—ay easily—tell thee my tale through the livelong
 Nor then should I make an end of the story of misery, [year ;
 The sum of the toil and the trouble the Gods have meted to me.

I come of the race of the dwellers in Crete's fair land and wide,
 The son of a mighty man of wealth ; and many beside 200
 Tall sons in his house had he, that were born and nursed to him
 True sons of a lawful wife ; but me did a bought slave bare [there,
 Unto Kastor Hylax' son ; yet I boast myself of his race,
 For still with his true-born sons he gave me an honoured place,
 While he as a God was revered by the folk of the Cretan land,
 For the bliss of his days and his wealth, and his sons, a glorious
 band.

But it fell on a day that the Fates, the dread death-dealing ones,
 Bare him away unto Hades' halls, and his proud-souled sons
 Cast lots, and divided his living : for me, the son of the slave,
 Little enow was there left, and naught but a dwelling they gave.
 Yet in process of time did I win me a bride of wealthy men : [210
 Myself by my manhood I won her,—I was not a weakling then ;
 No battle-blenger was I !—now all is past long ago : [know.
 Nathless, I ween, by the stubble the harvest's wealth shalt thou
 Broken I am and wasted by troubles manifold—

Ah, but the War-god of yore and Athenè made me bold
 With hero-quelling spirit ! What time for the ambush I chose
 Mightiest men, devising mischief against my foes,
 Never my manful spirit looked on unto death in fear ; [220
 But far ahead of the rest would I bound, and I quenched my spear
 In blood ; nor availed swift feet when the foes' array 'gan yield.
 Even such in the battle was I, but I loved not to drudge in the field,
 Nor to rear me goodly sons by tame house-husbandry.

But ever the tossing oars of the galley were dear unto me,
 And the clash of the onset, the leap of the lance, and the arrow's
 flight, [affright ;

Things bitter and stern, at the which there be that quail with
 But in me I ween some God the desire for these begat ;
 For one man taketh his joy in this, and another in that.
 And, or ever the sons of Achaia to Troyland sailed to the war,
 Nine times I led forth warriors and swift-tracking galleys afar 230
 In foray on alien folk, and of booty we won great store,
 Whereof I chose as I craved, and by lot there fell to me more ;
 And fast did my house wax great, and myself a terror became ;
 And through all the Cretan land with awe men spoke my name.
 But at last, when wide-seeing Zeus did the hateful war-path plan,
 That loosed in death the knees of many and many a man,

Then did they call upon me and Idomeneus high-renowned
 To lead their galleys to Troy, and no escape was found;
 Since for two to withstand their eager clamour was all too hard.
 So there for nine long years the sons of Achaia warred. 240
 In the tenth we destroyed the city of Priam, and over the tide
 Sped homeward-bound; but a God dispersed the Achæans wide.
 But for wretched me did the wisdom of Zeus fresh evils devise;
 For it was but a month that I tarried and restfully gladdened mine
 eyes [ing avail,

With my children and wife and possessions; and then would noth-
 But I needs must forth on the sea, and for Egypt be spreading the
 sail.

So I and my godlike comrades made ready the ships with heed;
 Nine galleys we rigged for the raid, and the war-folk gathered with
 speed.

Thereafter for six days' space did my stout war-fellows feast;
 And day by day did I bring full many a stall-fed beast 250
 To feed the altar-fires and the banquet-cheer to provide: [wide;
 On the seventh day went we aboard, and we sailed from Crete-land
 And the fresh North-wind blew fair, and merrily swept us on
 Smoothly, as down a stream, and of all my ships not one
 Gat harm, but all unscathed and unvexed sat we at our ease;
 And the ships were unswervingly sped by the helmsman's hand
 and the breeze.

On the fifth day came we to where fair Egypt's river flowed;
 And there in the broad stream's mouth our shapely galleys rode.
 And now did I straitly command my comrades true and tried [260
 To guard the galleys from mischief, and still by the keels to abide;
 And I hasted the feet of the watchmen, to look from cliff and hill.
 But the crews would not be controlled, and they followed their own
 wild will;

And in haste on the fair-tilled fields of Egypt's folk fell they,
 And they wasted the land, and they took their women and babes
 for a prey, [was borne.
 And they slaughtered the men; and swift to the city the clamour
 So the townsfolk hearing the outcry came with the breaking of
 morn.

And now did the footmen and battle-cars the whole plain cover
 With lightning-gleam of brass; and Zeus the thunder-lover
 Cast into the hearts of my men foul panic, till none would abide
 To withstand the charge of their foes, for bale was on every side.
 So there in the rout with the sharp brass many of us they slew, [270
 And they led off others alive, the bondslave's work to do.
 But into mine heart a device for my life did Zeus' self send,—
 But O to have perished in Egypt, and there to have come to mine
 For floods of sorrow and pain were over me yet to pass;— [end!
 I straightway put off from mine head the well-wrought morion of
 brass,

And the shield from my shoulders, and cast from my hand the bootless spear ;

And then to the battle-car of the king I drew anear, [wrath ;
And I clasped and kissed his knees, and in ruth he reined his
And weeping I sat on the car as it rolled on the homeward path,
While the war-waves dashed on the chariot, and tossed the surge
of the lances,

As the wrathful warriors howled for my life with murderous glances.
But he saved me, because that the wrath of Guest-ward Zeus he
feared, [heard.

Whose anger is hot when the cry of the suppliant wronged is
In their land seven years I remained, and I gathered abundantly
Of the wealth of the folk of Egypt, for all brought gifts unto me.
But it fell, when the eighth year came, as the shifting seasons rolled,
That there fared a Phœnician thither, a man deceitful-souled,
A griping knave, whose lies had undone full many before.

By his craft did he overpersuade me to sail to Phœnicia's shore, 290
To the land wherein his house and his wealth ill-gotten lay.
There did I tarry with him till a full year passed away.

But at last, when the months and the days were accomplished in
measure due,

And the new year came, and the round of the seasons began anew,
So he wrought, that I laid in his ship my wealth of merchandise ;
And he drew me aboard, unto Libya bound, by his counsel of lies ;
For he purposed to sell me there for a goodly price, for a slave.

And perforce I went in his keel, though somewhat my heart mis-
gave. [breath

And the ship ran over the waves with the fair fresh North-wind's
Past Crete's mid coast,—but Zeus was foredooming the traitor's
death. 300

Now as soon as the offing was gained, and under the dim sea-line
Sunk was the isle, and remained naught else but the sky and the
Then did Kronion bring a lurid cloud overhead, [brine,

And a gloom from its shadowing wing was over the waters spread.
And with rolling and crashing of thunder the lightning of Zeus was
hurled ; [whirled,

And the ship's whole length thereunder shivered, and round she
Filled with a sulphurous steam, and the crew from her decks were
flung : [were swung

Like the white sea-mews did they seem, as they hither and thither
Round the ship mid the foam and the swell, till the faces, a moment
tost, [was lost. 310

Sank, weighted with vengeance, to hell, and the hope of their home
But even as the anguish of death o'er my fainting spirit passed,
Allfather gave to mine hands the strong unbroken mast

Of the dark-prowed ship, to the end that from bane I yet might flee.
And I clasped it around, and the fierce winds swept me over the sea.
Nine days long did I drift : on the tenth to the Thesprot land

Was I brought in the starless night, as the vast swell rolled to the strand.

And the hero Pheidon their king received me with open hand :
 For his dear son came upon me on the shore as I lay half dead,
 Toil-spent in the chill of the dawn ; and home to the palace he led,
 Having lifted me up by the hand, till we came to his father's hall ;
 And a mantle and tunic he gave me, to clothe myself withal. [320
 There of Odysseus I heard ; for often the king would say [way :
 How he gave guest-welcome to him as he fared on his homeward
 And he showed me all the wealth that thither Odysseus had brought,
 The brass and the gold, and the iron in manifold fashion wrought.
 Good sooth, to the tenth generation his house might live thereon ;
 So huge was the treasure-heap that within the king's halls shone.
 But Odysseus, he said, to Dodona was gone, to hear the behest
 Of Zeus from the oak divine, the dark tree lofty-tressed,
 Whether openly he should come unto Ithaca's fruitful isle, 330
 Or in secret, for now had he wandered thence for a weary while.
 And he swore unto me, as in hall the wine of libation he poured,
 That the galley was launched, and the shipmen ready to go aboard
 To speed him over the seas to his own dear fatherland.
 But he sent me away before ; for a ship by Thesprots manned
 For Dulichium's land wheat-wealthy was spreading her woven wing :
 Wherefore he bade them bear me safe to Akastus the king. [fain,
 But of treacherous counsel concerning me were their false hearts
 To the end that I still might dwell in the midst of sorrow and pain.
 So, as soon as the sea-faring galley was far from the land on the sea,
 Forthwith 'gan they to contrive the day of bondage for me. [340
 They stripped off my mantle and tunic, the raiment bestowed by the
 And about me instead of these a wretched rag did they fling, [king,
 Even this that thou seest with thine eyes, this tunic tattered and vile.
 And at eventide they came unto Ithaca's far-seen isle. [they tied
 And the captive beneath the thwarts of the well-benched galley
 Straitly, with ropes strong-twisted : and down from the black ship's
 side

In haste they sprang, and they supped along the strand of the sea.
 But the Gods themselves bent back the bonds that fettered me
 Full easily ; then did I shroud mine head in the tattered vest. 350
 Down the polished rudder I slid, and softly I sank to the breast
 In the sea : thereafter I swam outspreading the oars of mine hands ;
 And out of their reach full soon in the gloaming I trod the sands.
 Then went I up unto where a thick copse covered the ground ;
 And I crouched and lay, and listened the while they prowled around
 Groaning and grudging : howbeit they counted it labour in vain
 Longer to tarry and search ; so they turned them backward again,
 And boarded the hollow ship ; but the very Gods on high
 Easily hid me, and guided ; and now have they brought me nigh
 To the wise man's homestead, seeing not yet is my weird to die." 360

Then thou, Eumæus the swineherd, to him gav'st back the word :

“ Ah stranger forlorn, mine heart in my breast hast thou verily stirred
 With the telling of all these things, thy woes and thy wandering.
 Yet this thou hast spoken is naught : I shall never believe this thing
 Concerning Odysseus ;—what aileth thee, thus wild lies to tell,
 And thou in such plight as thou art ? Nay, surely I know too well
 The tale of my king's return, and the high Gods' bitter spite,
 Because that in Troyland they could not bring him to death in the
 fight,

Nor to die in the arms of his friends, with his warfare-weaving ended.
 Then had Achaia done honour to him with death-rites splendid : 370
 Yea, he had won high fame for his son for the unborn day.
 But now without tidings or trace have the Storm-fiends snatched
 him away !

But aloof I dwell with the swine, and I go not unto the town,
 Save when Penelopè passing-wise doth summon me down,
 When tidings have come unto her of her yearning heart's desire ;
 And I see them sitting around, and of this and of that they inquire,
 Both they whose hearts for their king long lost are weary and sad,
 And they that, devouring his living without requital, be glad.
 But for me, to seek and to ask hath my very heart abhorred,
 Since the day an Aetolian cheated mine hope with a lying word, 380
 Who had murdered a man, and had fled far-roaming o'er many a
 land, [hand.

Till he came to mine hut, and I welcomed him freely with open
 He said he had seen him in Crete with Idomeneus, there repairing
 His galleys, which stormy winds had shattered in wild sea-faring.
 With the summer, he said, or the autumn-tide would Odysseus
 come

With his godlike comrades, and bringing a mighty treasure home.
 And thou, O grief-laden elder, whom hither a God hath led,
 Deem not that with lies I shall count me rewarded or comforted :
 For I shall not reverence thee, nor love thee for dealing so.
 This do I for awe of the Guest-ward Zeus, and for ruth of thy
 woe.” 390

Answering spake Odysseus the manifold-counselled chief :
 “ O but the heart in thy breast is verily slow of belief,
 Seeing that not by an oath can I bring thee to trust in me !
 But make we a covenant now, and thereof let the witnesses be
 The Gods in Olympus that dwell, to judge between us twain.
 If so it befall that thy king return to his palace again,
 Then clothe me in mantle and tunic, and help me forth, to depart
 Overseas to Dulichium's land, the goal of desire to my heart.
 But and if thy king come not as I say, and the new hope die,
 Set on me the thralls, and drag to a cliff, and hurl from on high,
 That every beggar thereafter may fear to flatter and lie.” [400

Answered and spake unto him the godlike warder of swine :
 “ Ay stranger, and so should glory and fair good luck be mine
 Among all men-folk, both now, and withal in the days to be,

Seeing thus to mine hut I have led thee, and given guest-cheer un-
If then I should murder thee, and take thy life away. [to thee,
Hopefully, trustfully then unto Kronos' son should I pray!

But now is the hour of supper : even now should my mates be here
In the hut for the eventide, to prepare them abundant cheer."

Thus in the hut they two communed with earnest words : 410
And anigh them the swine now drew, and the men that tended the
herds :

And they drove them into the close, to sleep in their wonted wise ;
And loud the clamour arose from the swine as they thronged the
sties.

And then to his fellow-thralls did the godlike swineherd say :

"Bring hither the best of the boars : for the guest from far away
Will I slay it ; we too will have pleasure thereof, who day by day
Weary and toil with pain, in tending the white-tusked beasts,
While strangers devour our labour in unbought robber-feasts."

With the brown bill then he wrought, and the keen edge cleft
the wood :

And a boar his fellows brought of five years, tender and good. 420
By the side of the hearth he set it ; nor now did the swineherd
wight

The Deathless Ones forget, for the thoughts of his heart were right.
But the forelock-bristles he shore, and he cast on the fire the hair
From the head of the white-tusked boar, and put up to the Gods
his prayer

For the home-returning day of Odysseus the wise of heart :

Thereafter the beast did he slay with an oak-billet cloven apart.

And the life fled away ; and the hide they singed, when the throat
they had cut. [herd put

And the carcase they carve and divide, and the flesh doth the swine-
From the limbs on every side on the rich white fat of the brute.

And he burnt it for sacrifice ; thereover the meal doth he strew : 430
Then the rest into pieces they slice, and they run the long spits
through : [drew.

And they roasted in heedful wise all this, and the roast they with-
And on chargers they piled the whole of the flesh, and to carve and
to share

The swineherd arose, for his soul gave heed to the just and the fair.
And he parted in portions seven the roast that before him was piled ;
And one to the Nymphs hath he given, and Hermes Maia's child,
With a prayer thereto, and the rest hath he shared to the tenders
of swine :

But he gave to Odysseus the best, the long unsevered chine
Of the beast, and he caused to rejoice the soul of his king and lord ;
And Odysseus lifted his voice, and the wise-heart spake the word :
"Mayest thou, Eumæus, to Zeus Allfather be even as dear [440
As to me, who hast honoured my low estate with abundant cheer."

And thou, Eumæus the swineherd, to him didst make reply :

“Nay, eat, good fellow, with joy of the things on the board that
lie, [hand,
While thou mayest; for now God giveth, and now withholdeth his
Even as seemeth him good, and none may his work withstand.”

Then the sacrifice-smoke rose up to the Gods that for ever abide:
And the flame-flushed drops he poured; and the city-waster, his
Received at his hands the cup, as he sat his portion beside. [lord,
And the bread Mesaulius brought unto each: him once on a day 450
For a thrall had Eumæus bought, when his king was far away.

To the Queen was the thing not known, nor Laertes the ancient
knew; [crew.

But he gat him for wealth of his own at the hands of a Taphian
So they put forth their hands for to eat of the meats on the board
that lay.

But when the desire of meat and of drink was clean done away,
The bread Mesaulius bare from the board; and satisfied
With the goodly evening-fare, full fain to their rest had they hied.

But the moonless dark drew on; all night the rain-floods poured,
The while from the death of the sun the West-wind mightily roared.
Then spake Odysseus, to test the swineherd's heart by the deed, 460
If his cloak he would doff for the guest whom he tended with such
good heed, [need:

Or would speak unto one of the rest to yield up his own for his
“Hearken to me, Eumæus, and merry companions all:
I will make my petition; for mad wine now on my spirit doth call,—
The wine, that causeth the song to break from the wise man's lip,
And maketh him fondly laugh, and setteth his feet to skip,
And hath thrust to the teeth-fence a word that were better un-
spoken, I wot.

Nevertheless, since I uttered my voice, I will hide it not.

Ah for the strength that was mine, and the youth, and the lustihead,
In the day when forth unto Troy for the ambush the heroes we led!
'Twas Odysseus and Atreus' son Menelaus that led the band, [470
And myself the third with these, for so did themselves command.
So when we were come to the town and the dark wall's twilight
frown,

Mid the brushwood copses about the city we cast us down.

Mid the tangle of reeds in the marsh we lay in our battle-gear;
And the darkness deepened, the freezing north-wind whistled drear;
And the snow fell fast like rime, and froze as it touched the ground,
And jagged fringes of ice were glistening the shield-rims round.
Now all the others were clad in mantle and tunic-vest,

And, with shields overlapping their shoulders, at ease were they
taking their rest. 480

But my cloak by the ships had I left with my friends in my heed-
lessness, [cold's keen stress:

For I deemed that the night would be warm, nor looked for the
So I came with only my shield and my girdle glittering-gay.

When the third watch came, and the stars were treading the down-
going way,

Then at last I spake to Odysseus, for nigh unto me he lay :
With my elbow I touched him, and straightway he hearkened with
diligent heed :

‘ O Zeus and Laertes’ son, Odysseus shiftful at need,
No more shall I be of the living ; I die with the wintry chill ;
For I have not my mantle : a God misguided me thus for my ill,
That I came with naught but my tunic, and now is it past relief.’ 490
Straightway a thought had birth in the heart of the crafty chief,—
So good in counsel still was that battle-mighty one !

And his word through the darkness came in whispered undertone :
‘ Hush, lest of any Achæan beside thy speech be heard.’

Then did he prop on his elbow his head, and he spake the word :
‘ Hear, friends, I have dreamed a dream : ’tis a heaven-sent vision,
I trow :

Behold, full far have we come from the ships ; now who will go
To Atreus’ son Agamemnon, the shepherd of folk, and say
That we would he should send more men from the galleys to swell
our array ?’

Straight at the word fleet Thoas, Andraimon’s son, upstarting, 500
Cast down his mantle of purple grain on the ground in departing ;
And he hied him to run to the ships ; and with joy I lay in his
cloak :

And it seemed but a moment thereafter till morning the gold-throned
Ah that I had but my youth, and my strength unwasted as then !
They would give me a mantle, I trow, in the hut of the swineherd
men,

Moved both by love and by reverent awe of so goodly a wight :
But now am I lightly esteemed, for my body is foully dight.”

And thou to the hero, Eumæus the swineherd, answeredst thus :
“ Yea, a right good story, father, is this thou hast told unto us :
And thou hast not spoken yet any word that the wise would hide.
Wherefore the raiment thou shalt not lack, nor aught beside [510
That right is to give when the suppliant cometh in woe to the door ;
But to-morn must thine own rags flutter around thee even as before.
For not many mantles, nor changes of tunic-vests to don,
Are found with such as we, but only for each man one.
But as soon as hitherward cometh Odysseus’ beloved son,
Himself shall give thee raiment, a mantle and tunic-vest,
And shall send thee whither thy heart would, even as seemeth thee
best.” [a bed,

To his feet with the word did he leap : he hath set by the hearth
And the shaggy fells of sheep and of goats thereover hath spread.
So Odysseus laid him down, and to shield him against the cold [520
A mantle the swineherd hath thrown, thick-woven of ample fold,
That himself would don when the frown of the tempest darkened
the wold.

Sound slept Odysseus then, where ruddy the hearth-flame gleamed,
And anigh him the younger men ; but ill to the swineherd it seemed
If within the hut he should lie from the swine-host far apart.

So he dight him, forth to hie ; and Odysseus rejoiced in his heart,
That the man watched well that his lord far distant should have no
He flung his keen-edged sword his brawny shoulders across ; [loss.
And a cloak, a defence from the blast, thick-woven, about him he
cast ;

530

And withal the shaggy skin of a great-girthed goat hath he ta'en,
And hath grasped his javelin keen, the nightly prowlers' bane.
And he went forth into the night, to sleep mid the bristly kind
'Neath a caverned crag's dark height, on the lee of the keen north-
wind.

BOOK XV.

How Telemachus came home again from Sparta, and escaped the death-snare.

BUT Pallas Athenê is gone unto Lacedæmon's plain,
To put in mind the son of the hero Odysseus again
Of his home-returning day, and to hasten him thence away.
And the Prince Telemachus there and Nestor's scion renowned
Asleep in the porch-hall fair of King Menelaus she found,—
Nay, sooth, but sleep's soft hold over Nestor's son had power,
But sweet sleep could not enfold Telemachus: hour after hour
Through the balmy slumber-tide for his father he mourned awake.
Then standing hard beside him Pallas Athenê spake: [10
“Telemachus, ill were it done in thee far from thy palace to roam,
Leaving unguarded thy goods with lawless men in thine home.
Beware lest with insolent pride they divide and devour the rest
That remaineth to thee; so shalt thou have come on a bootless quest.
Then haste thee, beseech Menelaus the mighty-voiced in the fray
That he let thee go, ere thy mother be clean departed away.
For now is she sorely constrained to wed by her sire and her brothers,
And to choose of the suitors Eurymachus, seeing he passeth the
others
In bringing of gifts, and his wooing-presents are many and fair.
See to it that nothing thou wouldst not away from thine halls they
bear. [20
For thou knowest what manner of spirit is found in woman's breast:
To the house of the man that doth wed her she longeth to bring of
the best. [past,
But her children, the once beloved, and her spouse of the days over-
The living, the dead, are forgotten; no thought unto them doth she
But go thyself, and whatever thou hast to a woman commit, [cast,
Whomso thou know'st of the servants true-hearted and prudent of
Till the day when the Gods for thee a helpmeet wife shall find. [wit,
I will tell thee another thing yet, and do thou lay it up in thy mind:
The chiefest of all the suitors for thee are lying in wait

Twixt Samos the rugged and Ithaca, even in the midst of the strait,
Eager to slay thee before thou be come to thy fatherland-home : 30
But I ween it shall not be so ; nay, sooner shall earth entomb
Many of them that devour thy substance under thy roof.

But keep thou the well-wrought ship from the island far aloof :
And by night as by day shalt thou sail, and one of the Deathless
shall send thee [thee.

A fair stern-wind ; for there is that watcheth thee still to befriend
But as soon as the ship shall have come unto Ithaca's uttermost
shore,

Thy galley and all thy companions send on to the city before ;
But thou, first go to thine herder of swine that abideth afield,
And, even as in days gone by, unto thee is loyal-willed.

There shalt thou sleep that night, and shalt send him, when morn
shall arise, 40

With a word in his mouth of thee, to Penelopê passing-wise ;
And so shall she know that, from Pylos returning, safe is her son."

So speaking, the Goddess away to Olympus on high is gone.
With his foot Telemachus stirred the old king's son as he slept ;
And a sudden, an eager word to his panting lips hath leapt :
" Rouse thee, Peisistratus, Nestor's son ! to the chariot lead
The strong-hoofed horses, and yoke them, and forth on our way let
us speed."

Answered and spake unto him Peisistratus, Nestor's son :
" Telemachus, hopeless it were, howsoever we long to be gone,
To drive through the mirk of the night ; but soon will the dawning
be here. 50

Tarry till Atreus' son, the hero renowned with the spear,
Menelaus, the gifts of his bountihead on the car shall lay,
And shall speak to us kindly words of parting, and send us away.
For him doth the guest through the rest of his life-days bear in mind,
The guest-fain host who hath given him greeting and welcome kind."

Full soon thereafter the Dawn gold-throned brought in the day ;
And anigh to their couch hath drawn Menelaus renowned in the
From his bed uprisen beside Queen Helen of lovely hair ; [fray,
And Odysseus' son espied the hero standing there.

On his body with haste he drew his tunic brightly dyed, 60
And over his shoulders threw his mantle floating wide,
And out through the door is he gone ; and thus to the hero began
Telemachus, dear-loved son of Odysseus the godlike man :

" Zeus-fostered Atreus' son, Menelaus, captain of war,
I pray thee suffer me now to depart to my fatherland-shore ;
For now mine heart is yearning to look on my home again."

Answered and spake unto him Menelaus the battle-fain :
" I would not hinder thy feet, not I, that they should not depart
When thy spirit is fain to be gone ; yea, oft it chafeth my heart,
Beholding a host that lavisheth love overmuch on his guest, 70
Or overmuch showeth his hate : nay, things in measure are best.

Yea, churlish alike I count him, who hasteth his guest away
When he would not depart, and who holdeth him, loth though he
be to stay. [fain would be gone !

Nay—good cheer for the guest while he tarries, good speed when he
Yet wait till I bring my gifts to the chariot and set them thereon,
Fair gifts, and thine eyes shall behold them : and I will speak the
word, [board.

And the women shall set forth a plentiful feast of our best on the
For this is for honour, yea also for bodily strength, I trow,
That men should be feasted, or ever afar on a journey they go.

—Say, through the length and the breadth of the land wouldst
thou turn aside ? 80

Lo, I will be thy companion, a chariot myself will provide.
I will shew thee the cities of men ; there be friends that shall
welcome us there,

Nor send us empty away, but somewhat from all shall we bear ;
A tripod of brass, or a laver their love shall bestow upon thee,
Or a couple of mules, or a golden chalice the gift shall be."

But to him Telemachus wise of spirit in answer spoke :
" Zeus-fostered Atreus' son, Menelaus, chieftain of folk,
I am fain to return straightway,—for I left no warder at home
To rule mine household and guard mine own till again I should
come—

Lest, as I seek for my godlike sire, myself should perish, 90
Or out of mine house be stolen some treasure that most I cherish."

When the hero-king, in the fray mighty-voiced, his answer heard,
To Helen the queen straightway and the handmaids he spake the
word,

To array the feastful board, and to lay of their best thereon.
And then drew nigh to his lord Eteôneus Boëthius' son ;
For he rose, since he dwelt not afar, to attend on his lord's desire.
And him Menelaus the war-wise commanded to kindle a fire,
And to roast them roast thereon ; and he rendered obedience meet.
But the hero himself is gone to a chamber odorous-sweet ; [100
Not alone, Megapenthes and fair-tressed Helen went with the king.
So when they were come unto where his treasures were glittering,
Menelaus chose from the store a double-chalice bright ;
And his son at his bidding bore a bowl of the silver white.

But Helen uplifteth lid of linen press and chest
Wherein bright raiment is hid that herself, the lovely-tressed,
Had wrought, and the lady divine thence taketh the fairest of all
Whose broideries brightest shine, and whose folds the amplest fall :
And it gleamed and it flashed as a star, and the lowest of all it lay.
And through chamber and corridor they haste to the prince once
more,

And thus the bright-haired war-chief Atreus' son 'gan say : 110
" May Zeus vouchsafe thee the boon for the which thine heart is
yearning ;

May the thundering spouse of Herê grant to thee home-returning,
And of all the royal treasures within my palace that shine,
The costliest thing and the fairest to see, even this shall be thine.
I will give thee a bowl fair-carven, of silver its precious mould,
Save only the rim thereof, and it gleams with the flame of gold.
'Tis the work of Hephæstus ; the hero Phaidimus gave it to me,
The Sidonians' king, when I stood 'neath the roof of his hall by the
sea, [shalt take."

As the home-track brought me thither; and this is the gift thou
He gave the double-chalice cup to his hands as he spake. 120
And strong Megapenthes brought and set at his feet on the ground
The silver bowl rich-wrought, and the sheen of it streamed around.
And thereafter Helen the fair-cheeked came to Odysseus' child;
And the robe in her hands she bare, and she spake, and kind she
"This gift moreover, beloved child, give I unto thee, [smiled:
A remembrance of Helen's hands: for the happy day let it be
When thou to thy bride shalt give it: till then, let it safely remain
In thy halls by thy mother. Farewell: soon mayest thou look full
On thy palace stately-reared, and thy fatherland-soil again." [fain

So she gave that fair-wove pall to his hands, and joyful-faced 130
Telemachus took it; and all in the car Peisistratus placed, [loom
With amaze at the rich-wrought ore and the lovely child of the
And Atreides went before them to lead to the banqueting-room.
So they sat upon couch and throne by Atreus' kingly son;
And the bright spring water was brought by a maiden, and poured
Golden, beautiful-wrought, into laver of silver pure, [from a ewer
To wash withal; and she spread a table of polished sheen
By their side, and served was the bread by the stewardess modest
of mien,

With all things dainty to eat, given freely of all her store.
And the sewer carved the meat, and to each his portion bore; 140
And the son of the hero renowned the wine to the rest bare round;
So they put forth their hands to eat of the cheer on the board that
lay. [away.

But as soon as the craving for meat and for drink was clean done
Telemachus then and the son of Nestor the horses brought ;
And they yoked them, and mounted upon the chariot cunningly
wrought.

And forth they drove to the sound of the porchway echoing round ;
And Atreus' son the bright-haired hero followed behind
With the honey-heart wine in his right hand, mixed for the farewell
kind, [golden cup.

That, or ever they went, they should pour to the Gods from the
And he came and he stood before the chariot, and lifted it up: 150
"Farewell, youths. Greet well Nestor the shepherd of folk for
For kind unto me evermore he was, as a father might be, [me:
So long as we warred in Troy, we sons of Achæan men."

And to him Telemachus wise of spirit answered then :

"Yea verily, blessed of heaven, to him will we surely go
And speak this greeting of thine ;—but O that even so
Unto Ithaca coming again, I might find Odysseus there,
And might tell of my sojourn with thee, of thy stintless loving care,
And might point to the treasures I bring, the gifts so many and
fair !"

Even as he spoke, on the right flew a bird of augury by, 160
An eagle bearing a white goose trussed in his talons on high,
A tame fowl out of the farm ; and the men and the women fast
Followed, a clamouring swarm ; but the bird came darting past
In front of the car on the right ; and they, as they looked thereon,
Rejoiced for the omen, and light grew the heart of every one.
And Peisistratus, Nestor's son, to the others turned him, and spoke :
"Menelaus, blessed of Zeus, bethink thee, chieftain of folk,
Whether the God doth send unto thee or to us this sign."

He spake, and the War-god's friend Menelaus essayed to divine
How he should wisely make meet answer and true, well-trowing :
But, or ever his word came, spake the lady of robes long-flowing :
"Hearken to me, I will prophesy that which the Deathless send
Into my soul, and even as I deem shall be the end.
As the eagle born and bred on the mountain's wild bleak face
Hath snatched away this goose soft-reared in a sheltered place,
So, after manifold troubles and roving's o'er land and sea,
Shall Odysseus with vengeance return to his home ; yea now, it may
He is there, and for all the suitors already deviseth bane." [be,

Then unto her wise-witted Telemachus answered again :
"May Zeus, loud-thundering spouse of Herê, so order it now ; 180
Then thee even there as a God will I hail with prayer and vow."
He spake, and he laid on the lash, and away the fleet steeds dash :
Eagerly flew they, crossing the city to win to the plain. [rein.
So all through the day they went tossing the jingling yoke and the
And the sun went down, and all the ways were o'ershadowed with
And they came in the evenfall unto Pheræ, Diocles' home, [gloom ;
Whose father Orsilochus high descent from Alpheius drew.

There for the night did they lie, and he gave them the guest-fare due.
When Dawn from her mist-veil broke with rosily-flushing light,
They put the steeds to the yoke of the chariot cunningly dight ; 190
And forth they tramped to the sound of the porchway echoing round ;
And he touched the steeds with the whip, and with right good will
they flew.

And quickly anigh unto steep-built Pylos town they drew ;
And then to the son of the ancient king Telemachus spake : [sake—
"Nestor's son, wouldst thou promise the thing that I ask for my
And how perform it ? For ever our fathers' friendship endears
Each to the other : moreover we number the selfsame years ;
And by this wayfaring together the closelier knit shall we be.
Drive me not elsewhere, friend, but leave me by galley and sea ;
Else will the old king's masterful love compel me to stay 200

His guest in his halls—but I must, O I needs must hasten away."

So spake he, and Nestor's seed in his heart 'gan cast about
How he might compass the deed, and the promise be stainless of
And so he devised this shift, and the best it seemed to be: [doubt.
He turned the steeds to the swift black ship and the strand of the
sea.

And the beautiful gifts he bare, and abaft in the galley he stored,
The gold and the raiment fair, the gifts of Sparta's lord; [word:
And he hastened Telemachus there, and he spake the light-winged
"Now speed thee aboard, and bid thy fellows be hastening,
Before I return to the palace, and tell the ancient king. 210

For indeed this thing do I know full well in my mind and my heart,
That his spirit will brook no denial; he will not let thee depart,
But himself will come hither to call thee: I trow he will not return
Empty, for indignation-kindled his anger will burn." [maned;

So he spake, and away loose-reined went the car-steeds beautiful-
Swiftly to Pylos he hied him, and came to the palace again.
And Telemachus turned him, and cried, as he stood on the shore,
to his men:

"Shipmates all, now deal with the black ship's tackling-array;
And let us aboard ourselves, to the end we may speed on our way."
So the shipmen-wights gave heed to his bidding with willing hearts;
And they boarded the galley with speed, and they sat them down
on the thwarts.

So there toiled he; and with vow and prayer to Athenê on high
He is sacrificing now by the stern;—lo, a man draweth nigh,
From a far land fleeing, because that in Argos a man had he slain.
Yet a prophet the manslayer was, and born of Melampus' strain,
Who of old in Pylos, the mother of sheep, was wont to abide;
And his palace was great, none other o'erpassed its stately pride.
To a far land then he departed, fleeing his native place
And Nêleus the mighty-hearted, the noblest of all earth's race.
A long year wearily rolled, and his wealth through all that year 230
Was in Nêleus' tyrannous hold, and Melampus in duress drear,
In bonds right bitter to break, in the halls of Phylacus lay
For Nêleus' daughter's sake, and the desperate mad essay
Whereunto a stronger drave him, the fearful Erinnys divine. [kine
Yet 'scaped he the jaws of the grave, and he drave the bellowing
To Pylos from Phylacê's meads; and vengeance on Nêleus' head
He took for his shameful deeds; and withal to his brother he led
A queen for his halls and a bride: but from fatherland far went he
Unto Argos' horsemeads wide; for so was it Fate's decree
That there he should live out his life, and be king of the Argives
there. 240

And he took to himself a wife, and he built halls stately and fair.
Antiphates, Mantius, these were his sons, right stalwart and bold:
And born to Antiphates was Oicles mighty-souled.
Unto him was the battle-waker Amphiarus born,

Whom Zeus the Aegis-shaker, and He of the hair unshorn
 Loved passing well : yet he won not the grey eld-threshold of life,
 But at Thebes he perished, done to death by a bribe-bought wife.
 Yet his sons were glorious, Alcmaeon and Amphilochus.
 And to Mantius moreover were born Polyphoides and Cleitus the fair ;
 But Cleitus the gold-throned Morn for his beauty to heaven bare ;
 So he dwelleth afar where the Deathless are, and she loveth him
 there.

But great beyond all other prophets on earth that abide
 Apollo made his brother, when Amphiaraus had died.
 But to far Hyperesia the seer fled, bitterly wroth with his father ;
 And thither, his wisdom to hear, all peoples wont to gather.

Now the child of a prophet-race—Theoklymenus named they his
 name— [came,
 Drew near them in desperate case ; and Telemachus, even as he
 With the cup of libation in hand, made his prayer by the swift
 black ship ; [lip :
 And the fugitive stood on the strand, and he cried with quivering
 " O friend, since I find thee now doing sacrifice here on the shore,
 By thy sacrifice I beseech, by the God whose grace ye implore,
 By thine head, by the heads of thy fellows that follow thee, heeding
 thy hest,

Hide not, but give me an answer of truth unto this my request :
 Who art thou ?—thy nation ?—thy city and parents, where be they ? "

Then unto him did Telemachus prudent in spirit say :
 " Yea, I will give thee, stranger, an answer of truth in this.
 Of Ithacan race am I, and my father Odysseus is,—
 If ever he lived—but now hath he perished wretchedly :
 Therefore with comrades and swift black ship I came over the sea,
 To seek after news of my sire, who departed from us long since." 270

And the godlike seer Theoklymenus answered and spake to the
 prince :
 " I too am afar from my land, for I slew a man and I fled, [dead ;
 For that many the brethren were and the kinsfolk of him that is
 And they mightily rule the Achæans in Argos, the horsemead-land.
 And fleeing the blackness of death at the fierce avenger's hand,
 I find no rest : I am doomed up and down among men to roam.
 O give me a place in thy ship, who a fugitive suppliant come,
 Lest they take me and slay ; for I think they are following hard
 behind."

Answered and spake unto him Telemachus prudent of mind :
 " I will thrust thee not from the shapely ship, neither spurn thy
 request. 280
 Nay, follow, and thou shalt be welcome, and have thy share of the
 best."

Then from the hand of the seer he received his lance, and he laid
 The brazen-pointed spear on the deck of the ship wave-swayed ;
 And himself to the stern hath hied of the galley that useth to plough

The fields of the hoary tide ; and he seateth himself, and the seer
 He causeth to sit by his side, and they cast off the hawsers now.
 And Telemachus called on his men to deal with the tackling-gear ;
 And they right hastily then to the words of his mouth gave ear ;
 And they hoisted the tall pine-mast, and they set it into its place
 In the centre-block, and fast with the two forestays did they brace ;
 And they spread the white sail wide with the thongs of the twisted
 hide ;

And a fair breeze sprang up behind—it was Pallas Athenê's gift—
 A mightily-rushing wind, and the good ship leapt ; and swift
 O'er the brine of the sea she speeds, by foam-silver and wave-hol-
 low-gleam ;

And they flit by Cruni's meads and by Chalcis' beautiful stream.
 And the sun went down, and all earth-ways grew dim in the gloom ;
 And through dusk of the evenfall 'gan Phaia's foreland to loom ;
 And the breezes of heaven drave the good ship over the wave
 Past Elis, the realm divine of the royal Epeian line.

So thence stood he out for the isles in the offing far away ; 300
 And he thought of the dark death-toils ;—should he 'scape them, or
 fall their prey ?

Meanwhile in the eventide the swineherd supped with his lord
 In the hut ; and there beside them the herdmen sat at the board.
 But when hunger was done away, and the men had drunken their
 fill,

Then Odysseus began his say—to know of the swineherd's will,
 Whether with kindly heart he would welcome him still to stay
 In the steading, or bid him depart on the cityward-tending way—
 “ Hearken, Eumæus, and ye that here be gathered beside ;
 I am fain to get me hence to the city at morning-tide,
 To beg my bread, that I be not a burden to these and to thee. 310
 But counsel me well, I beseech thee, and send thou a guide with me
 Who shall lead me thither : but there shall I wander—for needs I
 must—

About the city, if any will give to me cup and crust.
 To the house of Odysseus withal, thy godlike lord, would I go,
 To Penelopè passing-wise, to tell of him whatso I know.
 Yea, withal would I go to the arrogant throng of the suitors there,
 If perchance they would give me to eat, for abundance they have
 and to spare.

I am ready to toil for them well, whatsoever the task shall be ;
 For I tell thee,—and give thou heed to my saying and hearken to
 me—

By the favour of Hermes the Guide-god, of him that is wont to
 The labours of all menfolk with a garland of grace and renown,
 No man shall be found my match in rendering service good,
 In keeping the fire ablaze, and in hewing the billets of wood,
 And in carving and roasting of meats, and in pouring the wine at
 the feast,

[crown 320

Such household work as is done for the great of the earth by the least."

But thou, Eumæus the swineherd, criest in sore dismay:

"O stranger, whence this purpose that leadeth thy heart astray?
Of a truth thou art utterly minded to rush forthwith on thy bane,
If thy will be indeed to enter the throng of the suitor train,
Whose outrage and violence reacheth the iron vault of the sky. 330
Not such as thou are the folk that for these the house-tasks ply.
Nay, they be young; gay mantle and beautiful tunic they wear;
And their heads aye glisten with oil, and their faces are blooming
and fair.

Even these are their serving-men, and their polished tables shine,
And they bend with their burden of bread, and of flesh, and of rosy
Nay, tarry, for no man accounteth it ill thy face to see, [wine.
Nor I, nor any of these my fellows that dwell with me.

But when hitherward cometh the dear-loved son of a godlike sire,
He shall bestow on thee mantle and tunic, goodly attire, [340
And shall help thee whithersoever thine heart and spirit is fain."

And the godlike Odysseus the toilworn answered the swineherd again:

"May Zeus Allfather, Eumæus, account thee as dear a friend
As I, who hast made my woes forlorn and my wanderings end!
Ah, homeless wandering is the sorest of evils to bear;
Yet 'tis tyrant hunger that bringeth on men heart-harassing care,
And feet that may find no rest, and weariful travail and pain.
But, seeing thou wilt that against his coming I here remain,
Come, touching the mother of godlike Odysseus tell me, I pray,
And the sire that he left on the threshold of eld as he went away;
Whether they yet are living beneath the rays of the sun, 350
Or are dead ere this, and to Hades' shadowy halls are gone."

Then unto him the swineherd-captain answering spake:

"As touching all this, O stranger, an answer of truth will I make.
Still liveth Laertes; but ever on Zeus Allfather he calls [halls;
That his life from his woe-worn limbs may be severed there in his
For sorely, sorely he mourns for his son, the departed, the lost,
And withal for his wise-souled wife, for he grieved for her death
the most,—

And his spirit was broken, and ere the time grey eld came on,
She perished, stricken with anguish because of her glorious son, [360
By a wretched death:—oh never may that man know such end,
Who dwells here, dear unto me, and doeth the deeds of a friend!
So long as she yet was alive, albeit she lived in grief,
So long did I care to enquire after tidings of that lost chief,
Because that she nursed me herself with Ctimenê peerless-fair,
The princess royally robed, the youngest child that she bare.
With her daughter she brought me up, and scarcely she honoured
me less.

But when we were come, we twain, unto youth-tide's loveliness,

For a bride-price untold unto Samê the princess passed away ;
 But me did her mother the queen attire in goodly array,
 In tunic and mantle and sandals, and bade her nursling depart, 370
 In the upland pastures to toil, yet with me went her heart.
 But her love and her care, I lack them now : yet the blest Gods
 Prosper the work of mine hands, for I toil with a hearty will. [still
 I can eat, I can drink, and still for the stranger a morsel I spare.
 But ne'er from our lady I hear a kindly word, and ne'er
 Taste kindly deed ; for a curse hath come on Odysseus' halls,
 Even overbearing men : yet sorely long we thralls
 To look on the face of our lady, to ask how all things fare,
 And to eat and to drink, and a gift of her bounty thence to bear
 To gladden the heart of the thralls, and to make their toil seem
 light." 380

And Odysseus the many-counselled spake to the swineherd wight :
 " Alas and alas ! a little one surely thou wast in the day [away.
 When thou wanderdest far from thine home, from thy parents far
 But come now, tell me this, and sooth be thy answering word :
 Did they waste a broad wayed city of men with fire and sword
 Where dwelt thy father and mother, and took thee captive in war ?
 Or abiding alone with the sheep or the oxen afield afar
 Did sea-robbers find thee, and bear in their galleys a slave oversea,
 Till in this man's halls a goodly price was paid them for thee ? "

Answered the swineherd-captain and spake to the island-king :
 " Stranger, seeing thou askest and seekest to know this thing, [390
 Give ear, and in silence delight thee, and drink as thou sitt'st at
 thine ease.

There is time for sleeping—for nights exceeding long are these,—
 And time for delight of stories ; what boots to be slumbering
 Before the time ? Yea, over-sleep is a wearisome thing.
 But ye, the rest of my fellows, whoso is minded so,
 Let him forth and sleep, and as soon as appeareth the dawning-glow,
 Let him break his fast, and follow the herds of Odysseus' swine.
 But we, let us rise not yet in the tent from the feast and the wine.
 We will gladden each other with stories of travail and pain and
 woe ; 400

For from springs of grief overpast may fountains of pleasure flow,
 When a man hath suffered much, far-wandering to and fro.
 And this I will tell, whereof thou askest and seekest to know.

Above Ortygia lieth an isle, and Syriê its name—
 If perchance thou hast heard it—the sun's path turneth aback at
 the same—

Not passing great is the compass thereof, but good is the ground ;
 For its pastures are clothed with flocks, and their corn and their
 wine abound ;

And poverty cometh not there ; and the hateful face of disease,
 That vexeth wretched mortals, hath never been seen by these.
 But when her people exceeding old begin to grow, 410

Then Artemis cometh against them, and He of the Silver Bow,
 And softly chill them to death with shafts like falling snow.
 Two cities there are, and between them the land is parted in twain ;
 And over both of these did the king my father reign,
 Ctesius, Ormenus' son, with godlike majesty crowned.
 Thither there came on a day Phœnicians galley-renowned,
 False knaves, with a freight of many a quaint and curious thing.
 A Phœnician woman dwelt in the halls of my father the king,
 Comely and tall, and cunning in labours of womankind.
 Now the wily Phœnician shipmen-rogues seduced her mind : 420
 By the ship at her linen-washing one of them found her, and lay
 In loving embrace with her,—and this thing leadeth astray
 Most surely a woman's heart, be she never so cunning of hand :
 And thereafter the man enquired of her name and her fatherland ;
 And she straightway made answer and spake of her father's high-
 roofed hall ;

‘ The Sidonian land brass-wealthy the home of my youth I call.
 Great was my father Arybas, mighty in wealth overflowing,
 But it fell on a day, as home from the lonely fields I was going,
 That Taphian rovers seized me, and bore me away a slave,
 And sold me in this man's halls, and a goodly price he gave.’ 430
 Answered and spake the man, by her side that in stealth had
 lain : [again,

‘ Now wouldst thou be willing to go with us back to thy country
 On the high-roofed home and thy father and mother to look once
 more ?

They are yet alive, and their wealth, men say, is a stintless store.’

Then spake the woman to them, and eagerly answered she :

‘ Yea, seafarers, that would I gladly, if ye will also agree
 To be bound by an oath to carry me safe to my fatherland-shore.’
 So spake she, and all the men as the woman bade them swore.
 And after the swearing was done, and the oath had been spoken by
 each,

Answered the woman again, and spake with wary speech : 440

‘ Now beware that none of you seem to know me, or turn to greet :
 But say not a word if ye meet me faring adown the street,
 Nor beside the spring, lest the story some tale-bearer's tongue
 should bring

To my master the old man's hall, and me into fetters he fling,
 Into bitter bonds, and for you he devise an evil fate. [freight.

But keep in your hearts my saying, and speed ye the sale of your
 But as soon as your traffic is done, and the victual aboard shall be,
 Then let a messenger come with speed to the palace for me.

For gold will I bring, on whatsoever mine hands I may lay ;
 And another passage-price withal will I willingly pay. 450

For I nurse the child of a mighty man in the halls of his pride,
 A shrewd little lad, and of strength to be running abroad by my
 side :

Him will I lead to the ship : he shall bring you a price untold,
When afar overseas unto outland folk the slave shall be sold.'
So speaking she turned her aback, and was gone to the palace fair.
And now for a whole year's space the shipmen tarried there
With the hollow galley, and trafficked, and gat them abundant store,
Till the galley was freighted for sailing the homeward track once
And they sent a messenger then to bid the woman away. [more.

There came a cunning man to my father's halls on a day, 460
Bearing a necklace of gold, with amber drops between ;
And before the maids and my mother glittered and glanced its sheen,
As they turned it about in the hall, and watched the light-play shine,
And proffered a price ; but he suddenly made to the woman the
sign,

And was gone unto where the galley lay by the wash of the foam.
Then took she my hand and she led me forth of the doors of my
home.

And tables she found in the porch, and goblets set thereon,
For my father's house-carles' feasting laid—but the men were gone ;
For into the council-ring and the folk-mote had they pressed ;—
So she snatched three chalices up, and she hid them away in her
breast. 470

And I in my child-simplicity followed her forth to my doom. [gloom.
And the sun went down, and all the ways were o'ershadowed with
And swiftly we went, and we came to the goodly harbour-bay
Where black in the dusk the Phœnicians' sea-swift galley lay.
And the shipmen ran her down and sailed the paths of the seas
As soon as they had us aboard, and Zeus sent behind us a breeze.
Six days steadily sailed we on through the day and the night.
But when Zeus the son of Kronos revealed the seventh day's light,
Then Artemis arrow-triumphant her bow on the woman drew ;
Down to the hold with a thud dropped she, as a dead sea-mew. 480
For the fishes' and sea-calves' prey they cast her into the sea ;
And I was left forlorn, heart-stricken with misery.

Onward to Ithaca's isle were we swept by the wind and the wave ;
And there with his substance Laertes bought me to be his slave.
So came it to pass that I looked upon this land first with mine eye."

Unto him Odysseus the Zeus-descended made reply :

"Eumæus, strangely the heart in my breast hath been verily moved
By the telling of all these things, and the woes that thy heart hath
proved.

Yet Zeus hath ordained that good should along with the evil befall ;
For after thy manifold griefs hath he brought thee unto the hall 490
Of a master who giveth thee meat and drink with kindly will ;
And good is the life that thou livest : but I—from ill unto ill
Have I roamed, and from city to city : and lo, I am homeless still."

So through the night talked they in the hush of the darkened place,
Till they turned to their rest, and lay in sleep for a little space ;
For the fair-throned Dawn from her veil soon broke.

And Telemachus' men

Off shore were dropping the sail, and the mast they lowered then
With haste, and the oars they plied to gain the mooring-ground ;
And the sleepers over the side they cast, and the hawsers bound.
Then sprang they ashore, and their feet flashed light in the hoary
brine. 500

And they made them ready their meat, and they mingled the flame-
flushed wine.

But when the desire of the bowl and the roast had been done away,
Telemachus wise of soul to the rest of the men 'gan say :

" Now shall ye speed the black ship back on her way to the town ;
But I will visit my herdmen by pasture and upland down.
City-wards down from my lands will I go with the eventide ;
And a recompense for your toil in the morning mine hand shall
A goodly banquet of flesh, and of pleasant-savoured wine." [provide ;
Then out and spake to the prince Theoclymenus, prophet divine :

" And whither, dear son, shall I go ? Unto which shall I take my
way 510

Of the halls of the men that in rugged Ithaca's isle bear sway ?
Shall I turn forthright to thy mother's palace and thine my feet ? "

And Telemachus wise of spirit to him made answer meet : [thus,
" In sooth I would bid thee a guest to our house, were it other than
And well shouldst thou fare ; but a sorry greeting were thine with us
Now, seeing I shall not be there, and my mother will not see thee ;
For seldom before the throng of the suitors appeareth she ;
But aloof from them ever she weaveth a web in an upper room.

Yet will I tell thee the name of another man, unto whom [520
Thou shalt come ; Eurymachus, wise-heart Polybus' glorious son.
The Ithacan folk as a God look up to that mighty one ;

For the noblest he is by far, and the most doth he desire
To wed my mother, and win the state of Odysseus my sire.
But Zeus Allfather, who dwelleth in heaven, knoweth to say
Whether death shall end the story, instead of the marriage-day."

Even as he spake, on the right a swift bird flashed through the air,
Apollo's servant, a kite ; and ever a dove he tare

Clutched in his talon-grip, and the feathers adown to the strand
Came floating between the ship and the child of the lord of the land.
Then did the prophet take the prince from the others aside ; 530

And he grasped his hand, and he spake a word of the fateful tide :
" Friend, none but a God hath sent this bird on thy right that flew ;
For as soon as I looked thereon, the augury-fowl I knew :

For in all the Ithacan land your line is the kingliest,
And the might of Odysseus' house overpasseth all the rest."

Answered and spake unto him Telemachus prudent of mind :
" Ah stranger, I would this saying of thine fulfilment may find.
Then shouldst thou know my love, and many a gift from me,
So that happy shouldst thou be accounted of whoso met with thee."

Then to Peiræus he spake, his comrade trusty and true : 540

“Peiræus, Clytius’ son, thou hast ever been wont to do
More for my sake than the rest that sailed unto Pylos with me :
Now also, I pray thee, take this stranger home with thee,
And kindly entreat him, and honour, till I shall return to the town.”

Made answer again Peiræus, the hero of battle-renown : [there,
“Telemachus, though thou shouldst tarry for many a long day
This man should be still my guest, and should fare as the honoured
fare.” [men

To the galley he turned him then, and he gave command to his
To climb the black ship’s side, and to let the hawsers go ; [550
And swiftly aboard they hied them, and sat on the thwarts arow.
And now hath Telemachus slipped round his feet the sandal-thong,
And his spear with the brass keen-tipped hath he grasped—it was
massy and strong—

On the deck of the ship as it lay ; and the hawsers the men let go ;
And they ran her asea through the spray, and they sailed for the
city ; for so

Was the hest of the dear-loved son of Odysseus, hero divine.
But swiftly his feet sped on till he came to the garth of the swine,
Where the trusty swineherd kept his ceaseless watch and ward,
Yea, amidst of the swine-host slept, for the love that he bare to his
lord.

BOOK XVI.

How Odysseus was made known to his son.

AS anigh came Telemachus' feet, the king and the swineherd
wight

Made ready the morning meat, and by this was the fire alight ;—
They had sent the herdmen away with the pasturing swine at the
dawning ;— [they fawning !

Lo, the dogs have forgotten to bay, and around the prince are
And Odysseus the godlike marked the leap and the whine of the
hounds

That ever at strangers barked ; and his ear caught footfall-sounds.
Straightway he spake winged words to Eumæus the master of swine :
“ Of a surety, Eumæus, hitherward cometh a comrade of thine,
Or some one the bandogs know, and not with barking greet,
But they fawn about him ; moreover I hear the treading of feet.” 10

Not yet were the words well done, when the porchway darkened :
a face

Was there in the door,—his son ! and Eumæus sprang up in amaze.
Dropped from his hands to the floor the bowls, wherein erst he
began

The flame-flushed wine to pour, and to meet his lord he ran ;
And he kissed that dear-loved head, and both his beautiful eyes ;
And he kissed his hands, and he shed warm tears in his glad sur-
prise.

And even as a father will pour forth welcome on one dear-loved
Who comes from a far-away shore where ten long years he hath
roved, [yearned,

His one son, stalwart and tall, for whom he hath sorrowed and
So now did the swineherd fall on the neck of the prince returned : 20
And he kissed him on every side, as one that had 'scaped from
death ;

And in sorrow and joy he cried with passionate sobbing breath :
“ Thou art come, my darling ! light of mine eyes ! I had thought
never more

To behold thy face, when the galley had borne thee to Pylos' shore.
Come in, come in, dear son, for mine heart is exceeding fain
To rejoice with the feast of mine eyes on my lord come hither
again;

For but seldom thou farest afield to the upland pasture-ground,
But still in the city abidest; such pleasure thine heart hath found
Day after day to behold the devouring suitor-train."

But to him wise-witted Telemachus answering spake again: 30
"Father, so let it be: for thy sake hither I come,
To look upon thee with mine eyes, and tidings to ask of mine home,
Whether still my mother abideth within our halls, or is wed
To another man ere this, and Odysseus' forsaken bed,
Stripped bare, is lying with curtains spider-wrought overspread."

Answered and spake unto him Eumæus the swineherd-chief,
"Nay verily yet she remaineth with heart ever steadfast in grief
Within thine halls; but a burden of pain the long day bears,
And the wings of the night trail heavily, clogged with the rain of
tears." [40]

So he took from Odysseus' son the spear keen-headed with brass;
And over the threshold stone did the prince Telemachus pass.
And Odysseus uprose before him, and moved from his seat aside,
But Telemachus spake from the door to forbid it, and kind he cried:
"Nay, stranger, rise not: myself will find me a seat elsewhere,
For the homestead is mine; yea, here is the man that my place
shall prepare."

So he sat him down, for now the swineherd hasted to strew
Full many a leafy bough; and a fleece thereover he threw;
And Odysseus' dear-loved child sat down on the new-made seat.
And for them the swineherd piled on platters the roasted meat,
Even that which the men ate not at their supper yesternight; 50
And he heaped the bread, and he brought it in plaited baskets
Into ivy bowl he poured the mingled honey-sweet wine; [white.
And he sat down facing his lord, the unknown hero divine;
And they put forth their hands for to eat of the meats on the board
that lay.

But when the desire of meat and of drink was clean done away,
Then to the godlike swineherd the prince Telemachus spoke:
"Whence, father, cometh the stranger, and how did the sailor-folk
Bring him to Ithaca's shore? What land do they boast for their
own?" [alone.]

For I doubt he hath scarcely come hitherward faring afoot and
Answering spakest thou, Eumæus the warder of swine: 60

"As touching this, dear son, shall soothfast answer be mine.
He boasteth the fair wide isle of Crete for his fatherland-home;
And from city to city, he saith, hath he long been tossed to roam;
For 'twas so some power in the high heaven spun his birth-tide
thread;

And now from a galley of Thesprot men hath he hardly fled,

And is come to my homestead. Into thine hands do I give him;
and thou

Do with him as seemeth thee good, for he is thy suppliant now."

And Telemachus wise of spirit to him made answer again :

"Eumæus, the thing thou hast spoken hath filled my soul with pain.
Should the stranger lodge in mine house in this its evil plight? 70
For myself am as yet but young, and mine hands are but scant of
might

To withstand a man, and to quell the kindled wrath of a foe.

And still is the heart of my mother wavering to and fro,

Aye doubting whether to tarry with me and to keep mine house,

Having respect to the voice of the folk and the bed of her spouse,

Or straightway to yield to be bride to the noblest man and the best

Of the princes that come to woo, and whose gifts overpass the rest.

But the guest that is come to thine house, he shall turn not empty
away :

I will clothe him in mantle and tunic-vest, right seemly array;

And a two-edged sword will I give, and sandal shoes for his feet, 80

And will send him whither his heart will, even as seemeth him
meet.

But thou, if thou wilt, shalt harbour him here by garth and stall,

And his raiment shall not be lacking; his food, I will send it all,

That to thee and thy fellows my guest may be nowise burdensome.

But thither amidst the suitors I would not have him come;—

For their insolent pride is mad, and for none are they wont to re-
frain;— [and pain :

Lest they scoff at the stranger, and mine should be helpless shame

For a hard thing is it for one, be he never so valiant, alone

To withstand a host, seeing many be mightier far than one." [90

Then godlike Odysseus the toil-worn answering took up the word :

"Dear friend, I cannot but speak my mind of that I have heard.

My very heart is galled and indignation-stirred [done

By the tale of the outrage and wrong that the insolent suitors have

In thine halls in thy despite, and thou so goodly a one! [folk

Say, with thine own consent art thou thus overborne? Have thy

Been driven to hate thee by some dire word that an oracle spoke?

Have thy brethren failed thee at need?—for men be wont to rely

On the battle-aid of such when the war-surge tosseth high.

Oh would I were young as thou, and my spirit, as now, on fire!

Oh to be son of the noble Odysseus! Oh that thy sire 100

Might return from his wandering!—for my hope not yet is dead.

I would not gainsay that an outland foe smote off mine head,

Save into the halls of Odysseus Laertes' son I came [shame.

With vengeance and bale for all that have wrought these deeds of

But if by a host I were mastered, one fighting against a horde,

Far liefer were I to die in mine own halls slain by the sword,

Than to look on mine household's ruin, the deeds of shame and

On the buffeting of the stranger, the handmaids haled along [wrong,

By shameful hands, while the fair halls echo the lecher's tread,
 On the drunkard swilling the wine and the glutton devouring the
 bread, 110
 For the goal that shall never be won, for the work that shall never
 be sped."

Answered and spake Telemachus wise in spirit, and said :
 "Stranger, herein will I tell the uttermost truth unto thee :
 It is not that the folk are at all wrath-kindled to hatred of me,
 Nor that brethren have failed me at need, on whom men went to
 For their battle-aid, whensoever the war-surge tosseth high. [rely
 For thus hath the son of Kronos narrowed our line unto one :
 Arkeisius begat one son, Laertes, and him alone ;
 And Laertes begat but Odysseus : Odysseus begat one son.
 And he left me here in his halls ere he tasted a father's joy, 120
 So that foes unnumbered have entered his house to waste and destroy.
 For all the chieftains that rule in the islands lying around,
 Dulichium, Samè, Zacynthus moreover, the forest-crowned,
 And all the princes that dwell in Ithaca's rugged isle,
 All these come wooing my mother ; the house they devour and spoil ;
 And she neither refuseth the hateful marriage, nor yet can she end
 Their wooing ; and ever the wealth of mine house do they recklessly
 spend ;

And soon these ravening beasts shall turn upon me and rend.
 But in sooth on the knees of the Deathless the issue of all this lies.
 But haste thee, father, and say to Penelopè passing-wise 130
 That safe I am and sound, and returned from Pylos home.
 But myself will abide here yet, and hither again shalt thou come.
 Her tell thou—none other ; take heed no Achæan beside shall know,
 For compassed I am with many a traitor and many a foe."

Then thou unto him, Eumæus the swineherd, madest reply :
 "I know it ; nor witless nor slow to understand am I.
 But answer me this, I beseech thee, and what is thy pleasure say :
 Shall I go to Laertes the woe-ridden also with tidings to-day ?
 For so long as he grieved for Odysseus, albeit his grief was great,
 Yet looked he unto the lands, and was wont to drink and to eat 140
 With his thralls in the house, whensoever the thing to his heart
 seemed good.

But since thou wentest to Pylos over the salt sea-flood,
 He hath had no heart to eat and to drink, men say, any more,
 Neither to look to the lands ; but he sitteth mourning sore
 With sighing and groans, and the flesh from his bones is wasting

Then unto him did Telemachus wise in spirit say : [away.]
 "It is hard : yet awhile let be, for all our sorrow and pain ;
 For if all might win with the wishing the things for the which they
 are fain,

Of all things first would I choose my father's home-coming day.
 But when thou hast told my mother, afield thou shalt not stray 150
 To tell to Laertes the tidings ; but speak to my mother, and say

That she send her stewardess-handmaid swiftly and secretly ;
And she shall tell to the ancient the things concerning me."

Now riseth the swineherd in haste, and his sandals taketh he,
And under his feet hath he braced, and is gone to the hall by the
Yet did not Eumæus escape in departing Athenê's eye ; [sea.
But the Goddess in woman's shape to the lonely hut drew nigh,
As a woman lovely and tall, and in marvellous loom-work wise ;
And she stood in the porchway-hall, and was seen of Odysseus' eyes.
But nothing Telemachus knew of her coming, nor saw her face ; 160
For the Gods are seen but of few, nor reveal them to all men's gaze.
But the awful presence divine the bandogs also espied, [side.
Nor barked, but with low scared whine fled they to the garth's far
And she signed to him, bending her brow, and Odysseus the Goddess
knew ; [wall,

And he went forth out of the hall, and he passed by the great garth-
And he standeth before her now, and her voice is thrilling him
through :

" O Zeus' and Laertes' seed, Odysseus shiftful at need,
Now to thy son shalt thou tell the word, and hide it not,
That ye for the death and doom of the suitors may weave you a plot
Ere ye go to the far-famed city ; and I, even I, will stay 170
Aloof from your side not long ; for I thirst for the battle-fray."

Then Athenê with wand of gold did the hero's body smite ;
And a fair-washed mantle's fold and a tunic of dye-hues bright
Were around his breast ; and he grew more stately and blooming-
young ;

And darkened the ashen hue of age, and his jaws waxed long
That were toothless erst, and the hair dark-clustering clothed his
chin.

Then back doth Athenê fare, and Odysseus passeth within.

And he stood in the lowly place, and his son was filled with amaze ;
And his eyes from the sight he withdrew, for he deemed that a God
he saw ; [awe :

And he spake, and the winged words flew from lips that panted with
" Other thou seemest to me, O stranger, now than before, [180
And other thy raiment, and wrinkled with eld is thy skin no more.
Sure thou art one of the Gods that dwell in the halls of the skies !
Be gracious, that so we may offer acceptable sacrifice
And golden gifts fair-fashioned ; and spare us now, I pray."

Then did Odysseus, the man of the manifold troubles, say :
" No God am I : deem not that the Deathless are such as I ;
But I am thy father, for whom thine heart in pain doth sigh
While the blasts of affliction madden, the waves of wrong beat high."

Then kissed he his son, while he rained down his cheeks the tears
in a shower 190
To the earth,—he had sternly constrained his heart and his eyes
till that hour.

But Telemachus spake, because not yet could his soul believe

That his very father it was, so strange was the thing to receive :
 "Thou art not, thou art not Odysseus my father!—a God doth cast
 A glamour upon me, to whelm me in wretchedness deeper at last.
 For never could mind of mortal man such a thing devise
 Alone, save a God himself came down from the height of the skies,
 To cause that a man should be old or young, as himself should
 desire ;

For a little agone thou wast old, and apparelled in evil attire ;
 But now art thou like to the Gods in the broad-arched heaven that
 abide." 200

And Odysseus the manifold-counselled made answer to him and
 "Telemachus, ill it beseemeth thee over-astonied to gaze [replied :
 On thy father come back to his home, or to shame him with doubt-
 ful amaze.

For there shall not come hither again any other Odysseus beside :
 But this that thou seest is he. I have suffered, have wandered wide ;
 And again am I come in the twentieth year to my fatherland.
 Lo, this is the work of Athenê ; lo, here is the Prey-giver's hand ;
 For she maketh me even such as seemeth her good, for she can.
 Yea, now she transformeth a wight to a beggar, and now to a man
 Clothed with the beauty of youth, and brave in goodly array. 210
 For easy it is for the Gods that in broad-arched heaven bear sway
 To exalt or abase the deathling, and who shall their will gainsay ? "

So spake he, and sat him down, and Telemachus now full fain
 Round his father his arms hath thrown, and he mourneth and
 weepeth amain.

And a passion of crying upsprang in the hearts so mightily stirred ;
 More vehement-loud it rang than the scream on the mountains heard
 When the eagles or vultures find the rock-ledge nest forlorn
 Of the callow brood that the hind from the eyry afar hath borne.
 So wildly adown from their eyes did the piteous tear-floods run :
 And the sunlight had failed from the skies long ere their lament had
 been done, 220

But that first the son refrained him, and unto his father he spoke :
 "In what manner of ship, dear father, now have the shipmen folk
 Brought thee to Ithaca's shore ? What land do they boast for their
 own ? [alone."

For I doubt thou hast scarcely come hitherward faring on foot and

Answered and spake Odysseus, the toil-tried hero divine :

"Concerning this, dear son, shall soothfast answer be mine.

The galley-renowned Phæacians brought me, who oft speed home
 Others, whoe'er to the far Phæacian country come.

In a swift ship lay I asleep when they brought me over the wave,
 And in Ithaca set me down, and glorious gifts they gave, 230
 Brass and gold in abundance, and lovely-woven array :

And in caves these things by the grace of the Gods lie hidden away.
 Athenê withal put it into mine heart to betake me hither,
 That here for the death of my foes we may take wise counsel together.

Come now, tell over the names of yonder suitors to me ;
 And so shall I know how many and who mine enemies be,
 That mine heart may face the peril, and ponder thereon, and know
 Whether we two shall be able alone to meet the foe,
 Or whether 'twere better to seek unto others for battle-aid." [240

And Telemachus prudent of spirit answered his father, and said :
 " My father, concerning thy mighty renown evermore I hear,
 How wise in counsel thou art, how strong of thine hands with the
 spear. [what hope

But a great thing and hard hast thou said : I am stricken aghast :
 That two alone with a host of mighty men may cope ?

For the band of the suitors is no poor ten ; no, not twice ten ;

But more, many more ; too soon shalt thou know the tale of the
 men.

Fifty and two have come from Dulichium's isle overseas,
 All chosen youths ; six henchmen moreover follow these :
 And from Samê hitherward gather spoilers twenty and four ;
 And out of Zacynthus are lords of Achæans twenty more ; 250
 And of Ithaca twelve, each one the son of a princely line :
 And with these is Medon the herald found, and the bard divine ;
 Two henchmen moreover they have in the carver's mystery skilled.
 If we meet all these, when thine halls with their multitude are
 filled,

Bitter and dread to thyself should the day of revenge betide.

But bethink thee well, if thou knowest of any avenger beside,
 Who shall stand to defend us with right good will in the evil day."

Then did the godlike Odysseus the toil-tried answer and say :

" Yea, I will tell thee, and mark thou, and hearken to me with heed :
 Bethink thee, will Pallas and Zeus Allfather suffice for our need ?

Or hast thou bethought thee yet of another champion beside ? " [260

Then unto him Telemachus prudent of spirit replied :

" Sooth, these thou namest for champions, mightiest helpers be they ;
 Though afar up on high in the clouds they be sitting, yet these
 bear sway

Over men that endure for a little and Gods that abide for aye."

Spake unto him Odysseus the godlike, the toil-tried, again :

" Be thou sure that for no long season those mightiest ones will
 refrain [the might

From the desperate strife, when the day of decision shall come, and
 Of the suitors is weighed against ours, and mine halls are loud with
 the fight.

But so soon as appeareth the dawn shalt thou get thee home again,
 And shalt mingle as heretofore with the arrogant suitor-train. [270

But after thee to the city the swineherd shall guide me to-morn

In semblance like to a beggar wretched and eld-forslorn.

And if they shall evil-entreat me, this thy spirit must bear,

And thy bosom must hide thy pain, how evil soever I fare.

Though they drag me along by the feet, and cast me forth of the place,

Though they hurl at me whatso they will,—look on, and refrain for
a space,

Save only to bid the madmen forbear the impious deed,
And to plead with unangry words :—yet they will not hearken nor
heed ; [the door. 280

For the day of their doom is at hand, and the vengeance is hard by
This too will I tell thee, and thou in thy bosom shalt ponder it o'er :
When Athenê the manifold-counselled shall put it into mine heart,
I will nod unto thee with mine head ; thou shalt mark it, and play
thy part.

What weapons soever of war in the halls of the palace lie,
Thou shalt bear them away, and store in the nook of a chamber
high.

Leave none behind ; and a guileful answer of soft words frame,
When the suitors shall miss their sheen, and shall ask thee touching
the same. [more

‘ I have taken them out of the smoke,’ say thou, ‘ for they seem no
Like those that Odysseus left when he sailed for the Trojan shore,
But marred, wheresoever the wreaths of the fire-reek wont to roll ;
And another fear and a greater Kronion hath put in my soul, [290
Lest perchance ye be heated with wine, and ye break into strife and
jar, [mar ;

And ye wound one another, and shame the feast, and your wooing
For a spell to draw men on hath the steel of the battle-gear.’

But for us two set thou aside two swords, and for each a spear,
And bucklers twain of the tough bull-hide for the grasp of our hand,
That at need we may rush and seize them ; but as for the suitor-band,
Athenê and Zeus shall befool their hearts, and the eyes of them blind.
This too will I tell unto thee ; thou store it deep in thy mind : [300
If thou art my son, and in deed and in truth of my blood art come,
Beware lest any man hear that Odysseus is found in his home.

Let not Laertes, nor yet the swineherd, be told of me,

Nor yet of the house-carles any, nor even Penelopè.

But thou and I alone will know of the women’s mind ; [and find

And concerning the hearts of the thralls will we search out also,

Whether anywhere any be left to hold us in honour and dread,

And who careth not, but despiseth thee in thy goodlihead.”

Then did his glorious son make answer to him and say :

“ My father, I ween thou shalt know mine heart in the coming day :

For I have not a soul rash-witted, my lips are used to be reined. 310

But of this last thing that thou saidst shall none advantage be gained,

But rather for both of us harm ; and I bid thee count the cost :

For in learning the minds of thy servants shall many a day be lost

As thou passest about thy lands, and the robbers in hall at their ease

Devour, and the lawless waste unshamed hath no surcease.

But concerning the women-folk, I would bid thee mark and be sure

Who are they that do thee dishonour, and who of the sin are
pure.

But I would not that, trying the men, from steading to steading we
wend;

But deal with them after, and bring the great work first to an end,
If thou hast sure tokens that Zeus the Aegis-lord is thy friend." 320

So there of the tide fate-fraught and the deed communed these two.
And the galley goodly-wrought anigh unto Ithaca drew,—
The keel that from Pylos sailed with the prince and his shipman-
band,— [channelled bay :

And she swept round the headland, and lay at rest in the deep-
And the glad sea-farers haled the black ship high on the sand.

Then come the henchmen tall, and their war-gear thence they bear ;
And they carry to Clytius' hall the gifts exceeding fair.

To the halls of Odysseus the king a herald straightway hies,

Tidings of joy to bring to Penelopê passing-wise,

How that afield is her son ; but the galley by his behest 330

To the city hath hied right on, lest with terror-haunted breast

That lady of high-born line should weep and weep evermore.

And it fell that the warder of swine and the herald met at the door ;

For the self-same tidings of good to the queen did these twain bring.

And so, when the feet of them stood in the halls of the godlike king,

The herald uplifted his voice in the midst of the handmaid-train :

" O Lady and Queen, rejoice, for thy son is come home again."

But the swineherd, drawing near to Penelopê, told her there
All things whatsoever her dear son gave him command to declare.

And when he had ended all that message of comforting words, 340

He left the garth and the hall, and he gat him back to his herds.

But the suitors—baffled spite and amazement filled each breast ;

And out of the hall forthright and the great court-wall they pressed ;

There gathered the hero's foes, and before the gates sat they.

And the son of Polybus rose, and Eurymachus 'gan his say :

" Lo friends, how Telemachus now hath defiantly done the deed !

Lo, now is his journey accomplished !—we deemed that he never
should speed.

Come, launch we the best of the galleys, and man it with fishermen
To bear them a message with speed that they hasten homeward
again."

[turned, 350

Yet were the words on his lip when by chance Amphinomus

And behold, the suitors' ship in the deep-channelled bay he discerned ;

And the sail were the shipmen taking in, and the oars were they
plying ;

Then into a light laugh breaking he turned to his fellows, crying :

" No need that we send any message, for lo, they are come again !

Some God hath told them thereof, or the ship fled past amain

Full in their sight, and they laboured to overtake her in vain."

Up rose the suitor-crew, and they hied them adown to the strand :

And they toiled with the shipmen, and drew the black ship up on
the sand :

And the henchmen haughty-hearted the arms from the galley bare.

To a folkmote the suitors departed, and suffered none other there 360
To sit, nor aged folk, nor yet of the young men one.

And to them Antinous spoke, Eupeithes' lawless son :

"Out on it ! how have the Gods drawn this man's feet from the net !

Day after day on the windy height were our watchers set,

One after other, till sank the sun and the last light failed.

Even then we took not our rest on the land, but we sailed and sailed

Through the night on the dreary-weltering sea till the dawn of the
day,

For Telemachus lurking in wait, with purpose to take him and slay.

Yet safely a God hath brought him home in spite of our hate.

Howbeit, here for Telemachus plan we a bitter fate ; 370

And let him not 'scape us a second time ; for never, I ween,

While he is alive shall the goal of our hearts' desire be seen :

For himself in counsel and understanding is cunning and keen,

And the hearts of the people are not with us now, as erst it hath been.

But come now, or ever he gather together the island-folk—

For I trow he will not pass by our deeds, nor his wrath will he cloak,

But in fury will rise in the midst of them all, and will bare our plot,

And will tell how we wove him a murder-web and prospered not.

And they, when they hear of our evil deeds, will nowise praise.

Beware ye, lest they requite on our heads the evil, and chase 380

All us from our land, and we come to a strange folk far away.

Let us first take him afield aloof from the city, and slay,

Or else in the way ; and his living and goods shall be ours that day.

We will part them, and share them amongst ourselves ; and give

we his house [spouse.

To the stripling's mother—nay, rather to him that shall be her

But and if my counsel be ill in your sight, and it pleaseth you rather

That he still live on, and keep whatsoe'er appertained to his father,

Then may we no longer devour at our pleasure the best of his store,

Gathering hither ; but each man, haunting the palace no more,

Must woo her in courtly wise with his gifts, until she shall wed 390

With the man who lavisheth most, and who cometh destiny-led."

So the fierce voice ceased ; and still sat the rest, and awhile none
broke

That silence heavy and chill, till at last Amphinomus spoke,—

The hero that Nisus begat, and Aretias' grandson was he,—

Who out of Dulichium's fat wheat-land and pasture-lea

Led forth a suitor-throng, and he pleased Penelopè best

In the words that he spake with his tongue, for that wise were the

thoughts of his breast ;

So with kindly intent to the young men now his rede he addressed :

"Friends, I were loth to murder Telemachus : fearful it is

To slay seed royal : enquire we first of the Gods touching this. 400

And if mighty Zeus's oracles counsel us not to spare,

I will kindle the others thereto, and myself will be foremost there.

But and if they shall turn us aback from the deed, I bid you forbear."

So did Amphinomus say, and his counsel pleased each one ;
 And passing thence away to Odysseus' hall are they gone ;
 And entering there sat they upon couch and polished throne.

But Penelopë passing-wise hath another thing yet to do,
 To appear before the eyes of the insolent suitor-crew ;
 For the tale had been told in her ears how they plotted her dear son's
 bane ; [the word. 410

For Medon the herald, who heard their counsels, had brought her
 To the hall, goaded on by her fears, went she with her handmaid-
 train.

She came to the feasting-place of the suitors, that lady divine ;
 And she stood by a column tall of the goodly-fashioned hall,
 Holding in front of her face her headveil dainty and fine.
 And her voice through the hall-hush thrilled as her indignation spoke :
 " Antinous, insolence-filled ! thou plotter of evil !—the folk
 Say that of all thy peers most noble thou art and wise
 In counsel and wisdom of words—thou noble ! who says so, lies !
 Madman, and why art thou weaving the web of murder and doom
 For Telemachus, neither regardest the suppliants, witness for whom
 Is Zeus ?—it is impious to fashion thy fellows a garment of woe ! [420
 What, knowest thou not how thy father came hither in flight long
 ago,

Fleeing a nation of foes, having kindled the flame of their wrath ?
 For he joined him with Taphian rovers, and went on the sea-robbers'
 path

In a raid on Thesprotia's folk, and in league with my people were they.
 Therefore they fain would have slain him, yea, torn his heart away,
 And have parted his wealth, and devoured his possessions many and
 good ;

But Odysseus held them in check, and he bridled their furious mood.
 His house dost thou shame and devour, his wife art thou wooing—
 ah me ! [430

His son wouldst thou slay ; and I, I have anguish of spirit of thee.
 I bid thee refrain thee, and speak to the rest that they also refrain."

And to her Eurymachus, Polybus' son, made answer again :
 " O child of Icarius' line, Penelopë passing-wise,
 Be thou of good cheer, and banish the dread on thy heart that lies.
 For there lives not the man, neither shall be, there shall not be born
 such an one

That shall dare to lift up his hand on Telemachus thy son,
 So long as I am alive and look on the light of the day.
 For this do I promise, and surely fulfilled shall be that which I say ;
 That man's dark blood on my spear shall quickly be streaming
 adown ;

For verily often Odysseus the waster of tower and town 440
 Set me a child on his knees, and he put in these hands of mine
 Roast dainties, and held to my lips the beaker of rose-flushed wine.
 Wherefore of all men Telemachus most to mine heart is dear,

And his death from the suitors' hands I bid thee in no wise fear ;
But that from the Gods may none of us shun when it cometh anear."

Cheering her thus did he say, while he plotted her darling's doom.
And the lady passed away to her shining upper room :

And there for the dear days dead and the love of Odysseus she wept,
Till Athenê the sleep-dews shed on her sorrowful eyes, and she slept.

As the sun sank low in the west came the godlike swineherd
again 450

To the king and his son, as they dressed them their supper : and
now had they slain

A young swine, tender and good :—but suddenly there doth stand
Athenê, as erst she stood, and she toucheth the king with her wand.

And Odysseus Laertes' son is again as an old man grown,

And he hath vile raiment upon his limbs, that he may not be known

When he meeteth the swineherd's eyes, lest the man should go and

To Penelopê passing-wise the thing it were good to conceal. [reveal

Then first to the warder of swine Telemachus spake the word :

"Thou art come, O godlike Eumæus : what news in the town hast
thou heard ? [back, 460

Have the haughty suitors home from their ambush by this come
Or still are they waiting to cut me off on the homeward track ?"

Then thou unto him, Eumæus the swineherd, madest reply :

"To ask and to seek into this but little heart had I

When down to the city I hied me. My soul was exceeding fain,

As soon as my message was said, to hasten hither again.

But there met me another messenger sent by thy mates of the sea,

Who told to thy mother before me the tidings concerning thee.

This also have I to tell, for I saw the thing with mine eyes :

It was just above the town, where the Knoll Hermæan doth rise,

That, looking aback to the sea, I beheld how a swift ship ran 470

Into our haven, and thronging the bulwarks was many a man ;

It was laden with shields and with spears two-headed gleaming arow ;

And I weened that these were the suitors, but nothing thereof do I
know."

Then smiled in triumphant wise Telemachus' sacred might,

To his father turning his eyes, but shunning the swineherd's sight.

So when all their labour was wrought and the feast by this was
prepared,

They ate, and their soul lacked nought of the banquet equal-shared.

So when they had put away the desire for the wine and the meat,

They turned to their rest, and they lay, and received the sleep-gift
sweet.

BOOK XVII.

How Odysseus came to his halls in guise of a beggar.

THE Rosy-fingered smiled through the folds of the mists of the night ;

And Telemachus, dear-loved child of Odysseus the godlike wight,
His beautiful sandals placed 'neath his feet, and the thongs he braced ;
And into his hands did he take the strong familiar spear,
Bound for the town ; and he spake a word in the swineherd's ear :

“ Father, I go to the city now, that my mother again
May look on my face, for I know full well that she will not refrain
From woeful lament and wail, and from shedding of tears for me,
Ere she see my very self. Now this is my hest unto thee :
This stranger forlorn shalt thou thitherward guide, to beg his meat 10
In the streets of the city, and whoso will shall give him to eat,
The pittance of crust and cup ; but I cannot in any wise
Harbour and feed all strangers, the while on mine heart grief lies.
Let the stranger be wroth as he will, himself shall bear the smart ;
I will gloze not, neither dissemble ; the truth is dear to mine heart.”

Answered and spake Odysseus, in manifold counsel tried :
“ Nay, friend, I desire not myself in the house of thy thrall to abide.
Better it is in the city to beg from door to door
Than afield, and whoso is willing shall give me to eat of his store :
For now am I all too old to abide by garth and stall, 20
And hither and hither to go at a master's beck and call.
Yea, go, and as thou commandest shall this man bring me on,
So soon as the fire shall have warmed me, and earth be aglow with
the sun,—

For my raiment is passing vile,—lest the frost of the dawning day
Break down my strength ; for the city, ye tell me, is far away.”

So he spake, and Telemachus passed through the garth, and was
citywards gone,

Speeding his feet full fast, by his thoughts of revenge spurred on.
And when he was come to the fair-placed palace, the stately hall,
He leaned the spear that he bare against a column tall ;

And in through the mighty door o'er the threshold of stone hath he
hied. 30

And him, as he entered, before the rest Eurycleia espied,
As the thick-curl'd fleeces she spread on the cunningly carven
thrones ;

And weeping to meet him she sped, and around him the other ones,
The maids of Odysseus the king, the steadfast-hearted, pressed ;
And with kisses of welcoming his shoulders and head they caressed.
Now forth of her bower hath gone Penelopë passing-wise,

Lovely as Artemis, or as Aphroditë the golden,
And she casteth around her son fond arms, with streaming eyes ;
And his beautiful eyes doth she kiss and his head in her clasp en-
folden ; [moans and sighs : 40

And the winged words brake from her lips, and she spake with
"Thou art come, Telemachus ! light of mine eyes ! I had thought
nevermore

To behold thy face, when the galley had borne thee to Pylos' shore
In secret against my will, to hear of thy sire well-loved.
O tell me, hast seen him at all in the lands whereunto thou hast
roved ? "

Then unto her wise-witted Telemachus answering spake :
"Prithee, my mother, upraise no voice of lamenting, nor shake
The strength of mine heart who have 'scaped destruction sudden
and dire.

But bathe thyself, and array thy body in stainless attire,
When thou with thine handmaid-train hast gone to thine upper room ;
And vow unto all the Gods to offer a hecatomb, 50
If Zeus will grant that a recompense stern on the guilty may fall.

But I to the folkmote-stead am going, to bid to mine hall
A stranger who fared with me when I sailed from Pylos' shore.

Him with my godlike comrades sent I on before :
And I bade Peiræus take my guest with himself to his home,
And kindly entreat him, and honour, till I from the field should be
come." [Queen ;

And his word of weight not light-winged fled by the ears of the
But she bathed herself, and she dight her body in raiment clean ;
And to all the Gods she vowed to offer a hecatomb,
If Zeus would requite on the proud oppressor a vengeance-doom. 60

Then forth Telemachus hied from the palace of pillared pride,
Spear in hand to the folkmote-place, and his fleet hounds followed
his tread ;

And over him heavenly grace did Pallas Athenê shed.
And with wonder and worship the crowd beheld as anigh he drew ;
Then gathered around him the proud-souled suitors, the traitorous
crew, [the heart ;

With fair soft words on the tongue, but with blackness of spite in
And with loathing he turned from the throng of liars, and gat him
apart,

Where Mentor was sitting beside Halitherses and Antiphus, they
That had been true comrades and tried of his sire in a long past
day. [of that; 70

Thither went he, and sat him down, and they asked him of this and
And Peiræus of spear-renown drew near unto where these sat,
Bringing his prophet guest through the town to the folkmote-stead :
Nor aloof did Telemachus bide, but he came to the stranger's side,
And first Peiræus addressed to the prince his speech, and he said :
" Telemachus, send with speed to mine house of thy handmaid-train,
And the gifts that the King Menelaus gave will I send thee annoy."

Answered and spake unto him Telemachus prudent in mind :
" Peiræus, we know not as yet what end these things shall find.
Now if so it befall that the suitors slay me by murder-stealth
In mine halls, and divide amongst them all my father's wealth, 80
I would have thee keep them, rather than any of these, and enjoy :
But and if I shall mete to my foes their reward, and in death destroy,
Glad shalt thou bring them to me in my triumph of banished annoy."

Then turned he and gat him home with the stranger trouble-
tried ;

And so soon as the twain were come to the palace of stately pride,
Their mantles they doff, and on chair and couch they lay them, and
pass

Into the lavers fair with the sheen of the polished brass.

So when each had been bathed of the maid, and anointed with un-
guent rare,

In tunics were they arrayed and in mantles warm for wear.

And forth of the bath are they gone, and they sit upon couch and
throne. 90

And the bright spring-water was brought by a maiden, and poured
from a ewer

Golden, beautiful-wrought, into laver of silver pure,

To wash withal, and she spread a table of polished sheen

Beside them, and served was the bread by the stewardess modest
of mien ;

And the board she covered o'er with dainties, the best of her store.

And his mother sat face to face with her son, on a couch reclining

By a broad hall-pillar's base, her delicate wool-threads twining.

And they put forth their hands for to eat of the meats on the board
that lay ;

But when the desire of meat and of drink was clean done away,

Unto them Penelopê passing-wise full mournfully said : 100

" My son, to my bower will I go, and my limbs will I lay on my bed,

The couch that is grown but a couch of sighs for the weary-hearted,

Ever made wet with my tears since the day that Odysseus departed

With the sons of Achaia to Troy :—but thou, thou wilt not deign,

Or ever this house be thronged with the insolent suitor-train,

To tell me concerning thy father's returning, if aught thou hast
heard."

And to her wise-witted Telemachus answering spake the word :
 "Mother mine, I will tell the truth from beginning to end unto thee.
 We sailed, and to Nestor the shepherd of Pylos' folk came we,
 And me in his high-built halls did the ancient hero greet, 110
 And kindly entreat, as a sire to his son giveth welcome sweet,
 When he comes from afar long-lost, even so with heart and hand
 Did the old king welcome me, he and his sons, a glorious band.
 But concerning Odysseus the patient-hearted, never, he said,
 Had he heard any earth-abider speak of him living or dead.
 But unto the spear-renowned Menelaus, Atreus' son,
 By horses and chariot goodly-wrought did he send me on.
 There looked I on Helen the Argive, her for the sake of whom
 Argive and Trojan mightily strove by the high Gods' doom.
 Then asked Menelaus the battle-shouter, the hero-king, 120
 Wherefore I came unto fair Lacedæmon journeying ;
 And I told him of all mine affliction, I hid not anything.
 And thereto with the words of his mouth he spake, and he made
 reply :

'O shame !—and these be the men that are fain in the couch to lie
 Of a hero mighty-hearted,—and they such a dastard throng !
 It is even as when a hind in the lair of a lion strong
 Layeth her new-dropt fawns, her tender younglings, asleep ;
 And she tracketh the deep-grassed dells and the spurs of the moun-
 tain-steep,

Cropping the pasture, the while that lion returns to his lair,
 And dealeth the weakling invaders a ghastly destruction there ; 130
 So unto them shall Odysseus a ghastly destruction bear.
 O Zeus Allfather, Athenê, Apollo, that this might befall,
 That like as he was when erewhile by Lesbos' stately wall
 He stood up with Philomeleides in desperate wrestling-strain,
 And mightily cast him down, that all the Achæans were fain,—
 Ah, in such wise if Odysseus amidst of the suitors were seen,
 Swift would the doom of them all be, bitter the bridal, I ween !
 And as touching the thing for the which thou prayest, and bidst me
 declare,

I will cheat thee not, nor speech of evasion shall answer thy prayer ;
 But even the things that the grey Sea-ancient spake unto me, 140
 No word of them all will I cover, nor hide them away from thee.
 In an island, said he, had he seen him stricken with mighty woe,
 In the halls of Calypso the nymph ; and she will not let him go,
 And he cannot escape from thence, nor return to his fatherland ;
 No galley with oars hath he, neither arms of a trusty band,
 To speed him away over long-ridging rollers of misty sea.'
 Thus Atreus' son, Menelaus the spear-famed, spake unto me.
 So I ended my quest, and returned ; and a breeze the Deathless gave,
 And they wafted me back to my fatherland swiftly over the wave."

So he spake ; in the sad Queen's breast her heart was mournfully
 stirred :

But the godlike prophet addressed to their ears a comforting word :
 "O wife of Odysseus Laertes' son, O Queen adored,
 He knoweth not—how should he know?—but hear thou this from me :
 Sheer truth will I prophesy, I will hide no whit from thee.
 Bear witness Zeus, above all the Gods, and the guest-fain board,
 And the hearth whereunto I am come of Odysseus the princely lord,
 That Odysseus is now in the land of his fathers in very deed,
 Biding his time, or astir, and of these wrongs taking heed,
 And ever for all the suitors he soweth vengeance-seed. [160
 I know by the augury-fowl that appeared by the ship to mine eyes :
 Yea, I expounded it then to thy son in the selfsame wise."

Made answer to him Penelopë passing-wise of mind :

"Ah stranger, I would thy words might such an accomplishment find.

Then shouldst thou know my kindness and many a gift from me,
 So that happy shouldst thou be accounted of whoso met with thee."

So they of the thoughts of their heart were communing together apart.

But in front of the halls of the king Odysseus the suitor-crew
 Did the hunting-javelins fling for their sport, and the quoits they threw,

On the level-beaten floor, where their insolence erst ran high,
 Till came the feasting-hour, and the flocks of the sheep drew nigh 170
 From the uplands on every side, as many a time before.

Then Medon the herald cried—for ever he pleased them more
 Than his fellows, and sat with the princes in hall at the feast and the bowl :

"Now gallants, seeing ye all with contests have gladdened your soul,
 Come away, for the banquet is dight, and the beasts are ready to kill ;

And in season to taste of the feast, I trow it is nowise ill."

So left they the athlete-game, and arose at the herald's call ;
 And when to the palace they came, the stately-standing hall,
 They doffed their mantles, and threw them down upon couch and seat.

And goodly sheep they slew and fatling goats for their meat, 180
 And many a boar huge-fed, and a pasture-fattened cow ;

And so was the banquet spread. From the country citywards now
 The King and Eumæus bestirred them to set their feet on the way.
 But first a counselling word doth the swineherd-captain say :

"Stranger, seeing thy purpose is set this day to be gone
 To the town as my prince hath commanded—I would thou couldst still stay on,

That here I might leave thee a trusty warder of garth and stall ;
 But I fear lest my lord's upbraiding upon mine head should fall,
 If I heed not his hest ; and who may the chiding of princes abide ?
 Come now, let us go, for the day is waning to eventide, 190

And the cold shall be keener what time in the gloaming the ways
wax dim." [unto him :

And Odysseus the manifold-counselled made answer and spake
" I know it—no dullard am I to perceive and to comprehend.

Yea, let us go, and thou shalt guide me through to the end.

If thou hast some staff ready cut, I beseech thee, give it to me,
To prop me withal, for ye say that the path is slippery."

Then over his shoulders he flung his unseemly wallet forlorn,
Tattered and patched, by a thong of twisted hide upborne.

And Eumæus gave to his guest a sturdy staff for his need.

So they went, and the hounds and the rest tarried, guarding the
stalls with heed, 200

O'er the fells as the swineherd pressed, to the city his king to lead,
A king,—but the semblance he bore of a beggar forlorn that day,
Old, bending wearily o'er a staff, and in woeful array.

But now, as faring adown the track of the rugged way,
They were drawing anigh to the town, to a fountain wrought came
they,

Where the lovely waters rolled which the folk of the city drew :

King Ithacus made it of old, and princes had wrought it anew.

And round about it a wood of the aspen water-growing,

A fair green circle, stood, and adown was the cool stream flowing,

Flashing forth from a crag on high ; and above was the mossy stone

Of an altar, and passers-by laid gifts to the nymphs thereon. [210

There to the twain drew nigh Melanthius, Dolius' son.

She-goats was he driving, the best that in all the flocks he might
find,

To be slain for the suitors' feast, and his two men followed behind.

And he marked as the wayfarers came, and he spake a railing word,

A felon word of shame ; and the soul of Odysseus was stirred :

" Lo now is the saying true,—one rogue is guide to another.

How the Gods bring like unto like, and brother will still be with
brother !

Whither, thou caitiff swineherd, art bringing this gluttonous beast,

This pestilent beggar, this cormorant hovering round the feast ? 220

Against full many a doorpost the sluggard's shoulder shall lean,

As he beggeth for scraps, not swords, nor the caldron's brazen
sheen.

Now if thou wouldst give him to me to abide by garth and stall,

And to sweep me the pens, and to bear green shoots to the kids,
this thrall [swill,—

Should get him a mighty thigh of the whey-draughts he should

Not he ! he hath learnt but the trade of the rogue ; he hath no will

To work as an honest man, but crouching and cringing still

He looketh by begging to fill the maw that nothing can fill.

But I tell thee, and surely accomplished shall be this saying of mine :

If ever he come to the hall of Odysseus the hero divine, 230

Many a footstool hurled at the buffeted sluggard's head

Shall glance from his ribs, from the hands of the proud hall-revellers sped." [wrath,

Then on the king did he leap as he passed, in the fool's blind
Dashing his foot on his hip; yet he stirred him not from the path:
But untaggered remained his feet; and Odysseus wavered there—
With a bound should he reach him and beat out his life with the
staff that he bare, [ground?—

Or aloft in his grip should he swing him and dash his head to the
Yet he reined in his rage, and the thing he endured: but wrathfully
frowned [skies:

The swineherd, upbraiding, and prayed, uplifting his hands to the
"O Nymphs of the fountain, daughters of Zeus, if in sacrifice 240
Odysseus to you ever burnt the fat-enfolded thighs
Of lambs and of kids, O grant this boon in our hour of need,
That Odysseus may come to his own, that a God may the long-lost
lead.

Then all that insolent pride should he scatter in disarray
Wherein thine arrogance flaunts as thou gaddest day after day
To the city, while evil shepherds destroy the flocks of thy lord."
And Melanthius, herdman of goats, flung back the bitter word:
"Gods! how the dog speaks out, the villain mischievous-souled,
The slave that ere long I will bear in a strong-benched black ship's
hold, [250

That my wealth may wax from his bondage from Ithaca far away.
O that the son by Apollo the silver-bowed this day
Might as surely be smitten, or overborne by the suitor-band,
As the father's home-coming day hath been lost in a far-off land!"

Then pressed he on before, as they fared unhastily.
Full soon to the palace door of the island-king came he;
And he entered the pillared place, and he sat at the board with the
rest,

With Eurymachus face to face, for the goatherd loved him best.
And they that ministered spread before him his portion of meat;
And the stewardess brought the bread, and gave him thereof to
eat.

But the hero ere long with his guide to the palace draweth anear;
Yet without for a little they bide, while a sweet sound thrilleth the
ear

As the glorious lyre-notes ring, for the bard their magic awaketh.
Then speaketh the unknown king—and the hand of the swineherd
he taketh:

"Eumæus, this house of Odysseus, stately and fair it is; [were this.
Though a thousand were clustered around it, the queen of them all
Manifold are the buildings thereof, and around the great court-yard
Is a wall and a cornice; and lo the two-leaved gates strong-barred!
No man might lightly esteem it, or count it poor to see.
And I know that there banquet within a goodly company; [270
For the roast-reek breathes, and falleth the melody-fountain-spray

From the lyre, which the Gods have made the bride of the feast for aye."

And thou, Eumæus the swineherd, to him madest answer in turn :
"Thou hast easily guessed, for in all things else art thou keen to discern.

But come, friend, take we counsel how it were best done now.
Into the palace stately-standing the first pass thou,
And into the throng of the suitors, and here will I wait outside ;
Or I will go in, if it please thee, and thou without shalt bide.
Yet stay not long, lest someone should light on thee tarrying there,
And should buffet or hurl at thee : wherefore hereof take heedful
care." [280

And the godlike Odysseus the toil-tried spake unto him in reply :
"I know it ; nor dull to perceive nor to comprehend am I.
Pass thou in first, and I will be left for a little alone.
No stranger am I unto blows, to fear me for buffet or stone.
My spirit is hardened : woes have I suffered many and sore
By billow and battle : let this come too, it is but one more.
Who hath found out a way to hide the belly's hungry rage,
Whereby all mortals inherit a trouble-heritage ?
Yea, for its sake are the strong-benched galleys made ready to go
Over the harvestless sea to harry an alien foe." [290

Thus they twain, standing anigh to the gate of the palace, said.
But a dog that was lying thereby pricked ears and uplifted his head.
It was Argus, Odysseus' hound ; himself had reared him of yore ;
Yet or ever his pleasure he found in the chase, unto Ilium's shore
Was he gone ; yet the dog long ago with the young men wont to fare
Through the woodland pursuing the roe and the mountain-goat and
the hare.

But he lieth a cast-off thing,—for far away now is the king,—
Where in front of the doors the dung of the mules and the kine
from the stalls [the thralls
Had been swept in heaps and flung, till the time should come for
To spread it forth on the tilth-lands broad of Odysseus the king.
There lieth Argus in filth, all vermin-festering. [300]

Yet now, as his dying eyes behold Odysseus appear,
He is moving his tail as he lies for joy ; he is drooping the ear :
But his strength is utterly gone, and he cannot crawl more near.

And Odysseus looking thereon must turn him away ; for the tear
Sprang to his eye, but he wiped it unmarked of the swineherd, and
"Eumæus, 'tis passing strange, this hound in the litter laid. [said :
Grand is his frame, yet what he hath been I do not know,
Whether fleetness in running he had to match this goodly show,
Or was but as the dogs that be pampered with dainties from feastful
boards,

And are nurtured for vain fair-seeming by pride-uplifted lords." 310

And Eumæus the swineherd spake to the beggar-king, and replied :
"Of a surety this is the hound of a king that afar hath died.

If his frame were but now as of old, and his deeds as the deeds of yore,

When Odysseus left him, passing away unto Troy-land shore,
Thou wouldst marvel beholding the fleetness and strength this dog showed then.

There was never a beast that escaped through the depth of the forest-glen, [track.

Whatsoever he chased; for he followed with scent unerring the
But evil hath compassed him now; for the lost will never come back,
And the heedless women-folk tend him not, but they leave him to lack.
Yea, thralls, when they feel no longer the hand of their lord and the
might, 320

Have no more will to render him honest service aright:

For the half of the manhood of man Zeus Thunderer taketh away
When his feet are caught in the net of the bondage-bringing day."

He hath passed the threshold-stone of the palace stately and proud;
To the feast-hall straight is he gone and the arrogant suitor-crowd.
But on Argus the doom of black death suddenly came down there,
As he looked on Odysseus come back to his own in the twentieth
year.

But Telemachus ere the rest through the length of the hall espied
The face of his swineherd guest, and he beckoned him unto his side,
Bending his brows, and thereat the swineherd beheld a seat, 330
Whereon the carver sat as he dealt the unstinted meat

To the suitors banqueting through the revelry-echoing place;
To Telemachus' board did he bring it, and sat there face to face
At the feast with his dear-loved lord; and the heralds drew nigh him,
and spread [the bread.

His portion of meat on the board, and he bare from the basket

And within a little space came Odysseus into the place;
And a beggar's semblance he bore, most woeful and eld-forlorn,
Propped on a staff; and he wore vile raiment unseemly and torn.
On the ashwood threshold screened by the shadows he sat in the door,
And against a pillar he leaned, the cypress that years before 340
Did the builder cunningly trim and straighten by measuring line.

And Telemachus called unto him and spake to the master of swine,
As he reached unto one of the maunds, and took him a loaf thereout,
And flesh as much as his hands could scanty compass about:
"Bear this to the stranger and give him from me, and command
him withal

That he ask of every suitor from end to end of the hall;
For shame is an evil cloak when its folds upon poverty fall."

He spake, and the swineherd hied him as soon as the hest he had
heard, [word:

And drew near to the hero's side; and he spake the light-winged
"Stranger, Telemachus giveth thee this, and commandeth withal
That thou ask of each of the suitors from end to end of the hall, [350
For that shame is an evil cloak when its folds on a beggar fall."

And Odysseus the manifold-counselled spake out unto him and replied :

“ King Zeus, be Telemachus blest above all on the earth that abide, And whatso his spirit desires of thy grace, may nought be denied.”

Then in both hands taking the meat and the bread by the swineherd borne,

He layeth in front of his feet that gift on the wallet forlorn,
And he ate of it even so long as the bard's voice gladdened the feast ;

And he made an end as the song of the godlike minstrel ceased ;
And the riot and brawl ran high—but there cometh another One, 360
For Pallas had drawn anigh to Odysseus Laertes' son ; [the throng,
And she moved him to gather the crust and the fragment from each of
And to know who among them were just in spirit, who lovers of
wrong :

Yet she willed not that any wight should escape from the meshes of
bale. [tale,

So he came unto each, from the right to the left, with the beggar's
Outstretching his hand to crave, as old in the beggar's ways,
And stirred with compassion they gave, and beheld him with wild-
ered amaze. [who ? ”

And each of his fellow beside him enquired “ Whence is he and
But the goatherd Melanthius cried in his spite to the lawless crew :
“ Harken to me, ye suitors that woo the far-famed queen. 370
As touching this stranger, in sooth, the wight ere now have I seen.
It was even Eumæus the swineherd that guided him on to this place ;
For himself, I know him not, neither whence he boasteth his race.”

Brake forth Antinous then, and with words of railing began :
“ Thou swineherd loon, thou scandal !—what ailed thee to bring this
man

On to the town ?—what, have we not vagrants enough beside,
Pestilent beggars, banquet-cormorants hungry-eyed ?

Dost thou deem it as nothing that these are devouring the goods of
thy lord [board ? ”

Hitherward thronging, but thou must be bidding this wretch to the
Answering spakest thou, Eumæus warder of swine : 380

“ Be thou never so noble, Antinous, folly this word is of thine.

Who goeth and biddeth a stranger, to sit at the feast and the wine,
Save the wise and the cunning of hand, that be honoured in all
men's sight,

As a seer, or a leech, a healer of sickness, or timber-wright,
Or a singer divine, whose song through the feast-hall thrilleth delight ?
It is these that be bidden, wherever on earth the feast is spread ;
But none to the banquet biddeth the beggar, to waste his bread.
But 'tis ever thus : to the thralls of Odysseus, and chiefly to me
Thou art harsh above all the suitors ; yet nought do I care for thee
So long as I see in the halls Penelopê passing-wise, 390
And the godlike Telemachus liveth to gladden the faithful eyes.”

Then unto him did Telemachus prudent in spirit say :

“ Prithee speak no more unto him : few words are best to-day.

But 'tis ever Antinous' wont in evil wise to brawl

With railing words, and he eggeth the others thereto withal.”

To Antinous turned he then, and with light-winged words spake on :

“ Antinous, kindly thou carest for me, as a sire for a son,

Who givest command that the stranger be driven away from mine
hall

With masterful word,—the Gods forefend that this should befall !

Give thou : I grudge not ; nay rather I bid thee, and as for my
mother [400

Thou needst not be careful for her, nor blush that any other,

Any thrall in the halls of Odysseus, be ware of the generous deed.

Ha, but the thought in thy breast is nowise to succour our need :

Thou grudgest to give, for that better thou lovest thyself to feed.”

Then out Antinous brake,—and his face glowed anger-red :—

“ Telemachus, blusterer ! reinless in passion ! what things hast thou
said ?

If all the suitors should give unto him but as much as I,

For three long months to the doors of thine house should he not
draw nigh.”

Then with an evil smile did he hold the footstool up

That bare his feet the while he feasted and drained the cup. 410

But the rest all gave well-willed, and the wallet with plenteous store

Of bread and of flesh they filled, and now but a little more,

And the king by the threshold would taste their bounty of banquet-
fare ;

Yet he comes to Antinous last, and he speaketh the beggar's prayer :

“ Give to me, friend, for among the Achæans thou art not, I deem,

The meanest, nay rather the noblest, for like to a king dost thou
seem.

Wherefore beyond the rest shouldst thou give with an open hand ;

And so will I spread thy fame abroad through every land.

Time was when I in a princely palace was wont to live,

A wealthy man, and oft to the wanderer then would I give ; 420

Whosoever he were, whatsoever his need, it mattered not.

I had thralls untold, and with all things else was my bliss full-fraught

That are found with the men that are rich and are praised for a
happy lot.

But Zeus brought ruin, for so was his pleasure concerning me.

He moved my spirit to go with the rovers of the sea :

For mine own undoing I sailed o'er the long sea-waves on a raid,

Till in Egypt's river I halted the galleys billow-swayed.

And now did I straitly command my comrades true and tried

To guard the galleys from mischief, and still by the keels to abide ;

And I hasted the feet of the watchmen, to look from cliff and hill ;

But the crews would not be controlled, and they followed their own
wild will,

And in haste on the fair-tilled fields of Egypt's folk fell they :
 And they wasted the land, and they took their women and babes for
 a prey, [borne ;
 And they slaughtered the men ; and swift to the city the clamour was
 So the townsmen, hearing the outcry, came with the breaking of
 morn.

And now did the footmen and battle-cars the whole plain cover
 With lightning-gleam of brass ; and Zeus the Thunder-lover
 Cast into the hearts of my men foul panic, till none would abide
 To withstand the onset of foemen, for bale was on every side.
 So there in the rout with the sharp brass many of us they slew, 440
 And they led off others alive, the bondslave's work to do.
 Then they gave me a thrall unto Dmetor the lord of the Cyprian land ;
 And he bare me away to the isle that he ruled with a mighty hand.
 Thence have I hitherward come through manifold trouble and pain."

And Antinous lifted his voice, and to him made answer again :
 " What God hath brought on us this bane to our banquet, this gall
 to our wine ? [mine,

Out ! get thee forth to the midst, and begone from this table of
 Lest thou light on a bitter Egypt and Cyprus in this same place !
 Lo now what a beggar is here !—thou bold knave shameless of face,
 One after other thou comest to all, and they give thee, in sooth, 450
 Recklessly lavish ; with none of them all is restraining nor ruth.
 They are bounteous with other men's cheer, whereof each hath
 enough and to spare."

And Odysseus the manifold-counselled turned on the railer there :
 " Gods ! under this goodly form is a niggardly soul and poor !
 Not a grain of salt wouldst thou give if the suppliant came to thy
 door, [me
 Thou who sitt'st at the board of another, and grudgest a crumb unto
 Of the cheer that lieth before thee heaped abundantly."

So he spake, but Antinous' soul with a madness of anger was
 stirred ; [word :
 And he glared with a murderous scowl as he loosed the swift-winged
 " Out of the house shalt thou never escape but in pitiful case, 460
 Who castest the word unto me, and revilest a prince to his face !"

His footstool then did he fling, and it struck with a heavy shock
 On the shoulder-blade of the king ; but Odysseus stood as a rock,
 Unstaggered by that which was sped from Antinous' hand at him ;
 But he silently shook his head, dark-brooding a purpose grim.
 And back to his threshold-seat did he go, and he laid by his side
 The wallet fulfilled of meat, and aloud to the suitors he cried :
 " Hear me, ye suitors that woo the fair queen world-renowned ;
 Let me utter the word that mine heart in my breast for my lips hath
 found. [groan, 470

No shame-stab pierceth a man, that for anguish his spirit should
 Unto whom shrewd buffets are dealt as he fighteth defending his
 own,

When the spoilers come down on his white-fleeced sheep or the herd
of his kine.

But this man hath struck me because of this wretched belly of mine,
This tyrant which bringeth on menfolk evils many and sore.

Wherefore, if there be Gods and Avenging Ones for the poor,
May the death-doom light on Antinous ere the bridal day!"

Unto him did Antinous son of Eupheithes fiercely say:

"Eat sitting in silence, stranger, or get thee hence away,

Lest the young men drag thee along through the house for the word
thou hast said, [shred." 480

By the foot or the hand, and the flesh from thy bones they strip and

But they all were kindled thereat with indignation strong;

And thus spake this one and that of the overweening throng:

"Foul was the blow that thou to the woe-worn vagrant hast given,

Thou accurséd Antinous, if there be Gods of a truth in the heaven—

Yea, the Gods in the bodies of outland strangers veil from sight

Their godhead, and pass through cities, and mark who doeth aright;

And they stand by the tyrant unseen, beholding mischief and spite."

Yet he gave no heed to the rest as they cried with indignant cry.

But the pain in Telemachus' breast and the anguish-surge swelled
high [him; 490

At the blow to his sire, yet he shed no tear from his eyelids for

But he silently shook his head, dark-brooding a purpose grim.

Now the tale to the bower came of Penelopë passing-wise

Of the blow and the feasthall's shame, and she cried with flashing
eyes:

"Even so may Apollo the silver-bowed smite even thee!"

And to her spake out the stewardess-handmaid Eurynomë:

"O for accomplishment of the thing for the which we pray!

None of them should look on the fair-throned dawn of another day."

Answered and spake unto her Penelopë passing-wise:

"Mother, they all are hateful, and nothing but evil devise;

But Antinous most is like unto black Death's loathly face. 500

Here cometh a woe-worn stranger to beg in the guest-thronged place,

Asking their alms—for bitter-constraining poverty bade;—

The rest all filled his hands, and were moved with ruth as he prayed:

But this man hurled with a footstool, smiting his shoulder-blade."

So spake in her heart-stricken pain the queen to her handmaid-
train,

As she sat in her bower—and divine Odysseus was supping still;—

And she summoned the warder of swine, and she uttered forth her
will:

"Hie thee, Eumæus the godlike, and speak to the stranger, and pray

That he come unto me: I would greet him, and know what he hath
to say

Of the lost, if he haply hath heard of Odysseus the trouble-tried, 510

Or hath seen with his eyes; for he seemeth as one that hath wandered
wide."

Then unto her didst thou, Eumæus the swineherd, say :
 " O Queen, if but the Achæans their clamorous tongues would stay,
 Such words flow forth of his lips, it would charm the heart in thy
 breast. [guest ;

Three nights he abode in mine homestead, three days he tarried my
 For thither he came in flight from the rovers of the sea ;
 But not yet hath he ended the tale of his manifold misery.

And even as a man will gaze on the face of the bard who sings,
 And a spell is on all men's souls while the god-taught melody rings ;
 Fain would they listen for ever ; he sings each heart his thrall ; 520
 So was I witchery-bound as he sat by my side in mine hall.

The friend of Odysseus he is, and their fathers were friends before,
 In the days when he dwelt in Crete, where Minos ruled of yore.

Thence hath he now come hither woe-buffed, trouble-tost.
 And he sayeth, and holdeth thereto, he hath heard of Odysseus the
 lost,

Alive, nor afar, but anigh, in the Thesprots' wealthy land ;
 And home is he coming with many a treasure-gift in his hand."

Answered and spake unto him Penelopé passing-wise :

" Go, call him hither : himself shall say it before mine eyes.
 But these—let them revel and riot at will in porchway and door, 530
 Or here in the halls as they list : it is not their hearts that be sore ;
 For at home have they wealth of their own, unwasted abundant store
 Of corn and of wine, and none but the housecarles to eat of the best.
 But day after day they come haunting our house, that we find no rest ;
 And ever they slaughter our sheep, and our fatling goats, and our
 kine ; [flushed wine

And they banquet, but not on their own, and they drink the flame-
 Recklessly ; wide is the waste, for here no hero we have
 Such as Odysseus was, from its ruin the house to save.

Ah, if Odysseus should come to his fatherland-home again,
 Soon with his son would he wreak his revenge on the tyrannous
 men ! " 540

From her son cometh, even as she saith it, an omen of cheering
 sound,

For the halls to the blast of the breath of his nostrils echo around.
 And Penelopé laugheth for glee, and the winged words speaketh she :
 " Hie thee, Eumæus, and bid the stranger come hither to me.

Mark how my son hath sneezed a blessing upon my speech :
 Therefore I trow Death's shafts shall the suitors unerringly reach :
 Not one of them all shall escape from the doom that is now drawn
 nigh.

This too will I say, and deep in thine heart let my promise lie :
 If I prove that the words come true that the stranger-wight shall say,
 I will clothe him in mantle and tunic-vest, right goodly array." 550

She spake, and the swineherd hied him as soon as the best he
 heard ;

And he came to the hero's side, and he spake the swift-winged word :

"Father stranger, Penelopë calleth thee hence to her bower apart,—
Telemachus' mother the passing-wise,—for that fain is her heart
To hear of the man she hath loved through griefs heart-wearying.
And if she shall find that thy words are soothfast in everything,
She will clothe thee in mantle and tunic, whereof thy need is sore,
And throughout the folk shalt thou beg thy bread from door to door ;
And who willet shall give thee, and so shall thine hunger be
satisfied."

Answered and spake unto him Odysseus the trouble-tryed : 560
"Eumæus; herein should the truth full soon of my lips be told
To the child of Icarius' line, Penelopë prudent-souled :
For well do I know him ; together the brunt of affliction we bore.
But the throng of the tyrannous suitors I dread, for their mad uproar
With its echoes of wrong goeth up to the heaven's iron floor.
'Twas but now that I came to the house ; no evil I wrought, but lo,
Rose this man against me, and hurled, and he dealt me a cruel blow.
Nought could Telemachus stay his hand, neither any beside.
Wherefore now, bid thou Penelopë wait till the eventide,
Till the sunlight shall fade from her halls, how eager soever she be ;
And then of her husband's home-coming day let her ask of me, [570
Seating me nigh to the fire, for that sorriest garments I wear,
As thou knowest thyself, for first unto thee did I make my prayer."

Then did the swineherd haste, when the words of the king he had
heard.

And as over the threshold he passed, Penelopë spake the word :
"Thou bringest him not, Eumæus ? What now is the wanderer's
thought ?

Is it fear of some lawless man, or is he abashed for aught ?
Sooth, little of worth to a beggar-wight were a shamefast brow."

Answering her, O swineherd Eumæus, spakest thou :
"Nay, well doth he speak and wisely, as any that heard him would
think. 580

From the insolent flouts of overweening men doth he shrink.
But he biddeth thee tarry awhile till the going down of the sun :
Yea, for thyself, O Queen, I trow it were better done
That alone thou shouldst speak, and none other should hearken the
stranger's replies."

Answered and spake unto him Penelopë passing-wise :
"Not witlessly deemeth the stranger, whatever his race and name ;
For none such as these wouldest thou find among men of mortal frame,
Such hearts to devise, such hands to accomplish outrage and shame."

So passioned the Queen ; but the warder of swine hath hied him
away

To the hall and its hateful disorder, as soon as he ended his say. 590
Eftsoons to Telemachus now he speaketh the word full low,
And anigh him his head doth he bow, lest the others may hear and
know :

"Friend, I am going away to watch over the swine and the rest,

Thy substance and mine ; but here do thou order all for the best.
Unto thine own safety first let thy soul give diligent heed,
For many a foe is plotting against thee the evil deed.
Zeus blast them or ever for us fruit grow of the baleful seed ! ”

Unto him thereafter Telemachus prudent-witted replied :
“ Father, so shall it be : go thou at the eventide.
Come again with the dawn, and bring fair victims for sacrifice. 600
But these shall be dealt with by me and the Deathless that dwell in
the skies.”

Then again the herdman of swine sat down on the fair-polished
seat, [meat.
Till his soul was filled with wine and the strength of the stintless
Then forth did he pass and away, and he left the courts and the hall
Filled with the banqueting throng ; and they in the dance and the
song
Revelled, for now the day died into the evenfall.

BOOK XVIII.

How Odysseus fought with Irus the giant beggar. Of the gifts to Penelope, and the flouts cast on Odysseus.

NOW a beggar-wight came to the place: few Ithacan homes but
saw
Daily his impudent face, and marvelled at that vast maw;
For giantlike he devoured and he drank, but his bodily might
Was naught, albeit he towered most huge in bulk to the sight.
Now the name whereby his mother her son from the birth-hour
named
Was Arnæus, albeit another for him had the young men framed,
Irus—the messenger flying at each man's beck and call.
Now cometh this beggar trying to chase the king from his hall,
Yea, from his own house-door; and with churlish words he railed:
“Dotard, begone from the threshold, lest forth by the foot thou be
haled. 10
Dost thou not mark how they wink with the eye to me, all sitting
there,
Bidding me drag thee away?—but for very shame I forbear.
Up, or contention of hands 'twixt us full soon shall arise.”
Spake Odysseus the manifold-counselled with sternly-glaring eyes;
“Man, neither by word nor deed do I do any wrong unto thee;
Neither grudge I that any man give thee, though never so much it be.
This threshold hath room for us both, and thou hast not need nor
right
To be grudging of other men's goods. I deem thee a beggar-wight
As I, and I doubt not the Gods will vouchsafe to thy prayers good
speed. [the deed, 20
But provoke not me with thine hands, lest thou waken my wrath to
And, old though I be, I bedabble thy breast and thy lips with gore;
Then should I have for the morrow quietness more than before.
For thou wilt not return any more, nor a second time, I trow,
Thy face in the halls of Odysseus Laertes' son wilt thou show.”

Then all aquiver with wrath cried Irus the beggar-wight :
 "Gods! how the tongue of the gluttonous hound runs trippingly
 light, [due!
 Like an old oven-wife, like a scolding shrew!—I will give him his
 Mine hands shall smite him, and dash the teeth from his jaws, and
 strew
 On the ground, as they break the teeth of a cornfield-wasting swine.
 Gird up thy loins, that these may all behold us two 30
 Fighting—ha, ha! thou fight with youth and strength like mine!"
 So there on the threshold the twain 'neath the hall-door's stately
 height

In bitter-gibing strain each kindled the other's spite.
 But Antinous, soon as he spied the railers, would set them to fight ;
 And he laughed for glee, and he cried to the rest with malicious de-
 light :

"Friends, never till now did anything like unto this befall,
 Such merry sport as a God hath brought this day to the hall !
 The stranger and Irus are wrangling together and ready to smite
 With the clenched hand : come, let us straightway set them together
 to fight."

Upspringing with laughter loud did they hie them forth right
 glad. 40

In a great ring gathered the crowd round the beggars sorrowfully clad.
 And now unto these doth Antinous, son of Eupeithes, cry :
 "Hearken, ye lordly suitors, a word for your ears have I :
 Here hiss on the fire two paunches of goats, for we laid them thereon
 Filled full with fat and with blood for our supper awhile agone.
 Now whoever shall conquer in fight and prove him the mightier one,
 Let him rise and take of the bakemeats whichso he will for his own ;
 And ever thereafter shall he feast here, and nevermore
 Will we suffer another beggar to enter the feast-hall door."

So did he speak, and the thing was good in the suitors' eyes. 50
 But wilily dealt the king, and he spake in cunning guise :
 "O friends, it may nowise be that an old man woe-fordone
 Should fight with the young and strong ; but my belly goadeth me on,
 This tyrant within, to the end that buffets my bane may be.
 But come now, all of you swear a mighty oath unto me
 That none, showing favour to Irus, will deal me a heavy blow
 With wrongful-smiting hand, to subdue me under my foe."

So did he speak, and each one of them pledged him thereto, nothing
 loth : [oath,

And as soon as the swearing was done, and they all had finished the
 Out spake the sacred might of the unknown hero's son : 60
 "If thine heart, O stranger, and manful spirit pricketh thee on
 To defend thee against this man, fear not for any beside ;
 For the battle-onset of many must whoso smites thee abide.
 The friend of the stranger am I, and the kings say yea unto it,
 Antinous here, and Eurymachus, princes prudent of wit."

Then all approved with a shout ; and Odysseus for fight prepared.
 He girdeth his rags about his loins, and his thighs hath he bared,
 Goodly and great to behold, and his shoulders broad and square,
 And his arms of sinewy mould, and his chest ; and Athenê there
 Made greater each huge limb of the shepherd of Ithaca's folk. 70
 And all they marvelled at him, and forth their amazement broke,
 As this one and that one cried to his fellow that stood by his side :
 " Irus un-Irus'd full soon on his head shall draw down woe,
 So brawny a thigh from the veil of his rags doth the old man show !"

But the dastard's heart was stirred with most exceeding affright ;
 Yet did the house-carles gird him and drag in his own despite
 To the midst of the ring, while shook his flesh upon every limb ;
 And with scornful withering look Antinous cried unto him :
 " Why wast thou born, thou lubber ?—why shouldst thou live any
 more,

If thou fear'st such a man as this, and dost shake with trembling
 sore 80

At an old man woe-forspent, overburdened with misery ?
 But this do I tell thee, and surely fulfilled shall my promise be :
 If this man prove him the better, and conquer thee in the fray,
 In a black ship's hold to the mainland shore will I send thee away
 Unto Echetus, unto the king that never doth pity nor spare,
 Who shall lop thy nose and thine ears with the ruthless brass, and
 tear [fare."

From thy body thy manhood, and cast to his hounds the blood-raw
 But the threat redoubled his dread, and his knees were bowed
 with affright ;

Yet him to the midst they led, and they lifted their hands to smite.
 Then a moment Odysseus pondered whether to lay him low 90
 With his soul from his body sundered by one fierce lightning-blow,
 Or lightly to strike, and but stretch on the ground the craven wretch.
 Swiftly he thought, and best it seemed in the hero's eyes
 Lightly to smite, lest the rest should pierce the king's disguise.
 Then Irus strikes, but the stroke o'er the hero's right arm slips ;
 Flashed out Odysseus's blow to the neck 'neath the ear of his foe,
 And the bones of the jaw it broke, and the black blood gushed from
 his lips ;

With a howl in the dust fell he, and he gnashed his teeth for pain,
 Kicking convulsively on the ground ; but the suitor-train
 Cast up their hands in their glee, and they reeled, with laughter
 slain. 100

But Odysseus dragged him thence by the foot through the porchway
 fair

On to the court and the fence of the garth, and he set him there
 Propped by the wall, and a staff thrust into his trembling hand ;
 And he spake with a scornful laugh the light-winged word of com-
 mand : [door :

" Now sit thou there, and be keeping the swine and the dogs from the

Neither lord it, thou pitiful wretch, o'er the stranger and poor any more,

Lest thou reap thee a heavier harvest of evil than ever before."

Then over his shoulders he flung his unseemly wallet forlorn,
Tattered and patched, by a thong of twisted hide upborne ;
And again to his threshold-seat he goeth, and all the throng 110
Stream past with laughter, and greet the hero with favouring
tongue : [reign,

" Stranger, may Zeus and the rest of the Deathless, on high that
Grant thee thy dearest wish for the which thine heart is fain,
Who hast ended the begging of this insatiate glutton to-day.

Forthright to the mainland, to Echetus, hence will we send him away,

To the king who lusts to destroy, and the hands that never spare."

Then Odysseus was filled with joy for the omen uttered there.
And the prize Antinous brought, the great goat-paunch with the blood

And the hissing fat full-fraught, and the princely Amphinomus stood
And reached two loaves from a maund, and bade the hero take : 120
And with golden chalice in hand he pledged him, and kindly he
spake :

" Hail, father stranger ; in days to be may thy bliss abound,
Albeit to-day with manifold ills thou be compassed around."

Answered Odysseus, the man in many a counsel wise :

" Amphinomus, prudent of wit dost thou verily seem in mine eyes,
As the son of thy father may well be ; oft have I heard of his fame.
There was prowess and wealth in the sound of Dulichian Nisus' name.

Of him wert thou gotten, they say : a word-wise man seem'st thou.
Therefore my rede shall be spoken : O hearken and heed it now.

Earth nourisheth nought that the Gods have created more puny
than man 130

Of all things that breathe and move on the earth their little span ;
For he saith ' I shall suffer no ill in the days that shall come after
these,' [of his knees :

While the Gods yet prosper his hands, and unbowed is the strength
But when sorrow and trouble are meted forth by the Gods ever-blest,
Contentless he groweth thereunder, and beareth a burdened breast.

For the mind of the earth-abiders is even such as the day
That is sent by the Father of Gods and men, so waver they.

For I too of old bade fair to be wealthy and great among men ;
And I walked in the pride of my strength, and did manifold folly
then. 140

In the might of my sire and my brethren's array my trust did I put :
And what am I now ?—let no man trample the right under foot ;
But let all men receive the Gods' gifts humbly and silently.

—What deeds of the suitors, what outrage and shame is this that I
see !

Lo how they dishonour the wife, lo how the possessions they spoil
Of a man who shall linger afar from his friends and his fatherland-
soil [his path,

Not long: he is even at the door. Mayest thou be withdrawn from
Safe at home by the grace of a God, that thou meet him not in his
wrath

In the day that he cometh again to his own dear fatherland;
For not without blood shall they part, even he and the suitor-band
In the hour when the hero's feet on his threshold-stone shall stand."

[150

Then the drops of libation he poured, and he drank of the glad-
dening cup,

And again to the hand of the lord of the isle-folk yielded it up.
Through the hall with slow sad tread, heart-stricken with vague
strange pain, [bane.

Went Amphinomus bowing his head, for his spirit foreboded his
Dimly he saw—too late: his feet in the gin were ta'en;
And Athenê had fixed his fate by Telemachus' spear to be slain;
For behold, on the seat whence of late he had risen he sitteth again.

But now the queen bethought her—'twas She of the flashing eyes
That moved Icarius' daughter, Penelopê passing-wise,
To appear to the suitors, that so the spoilers' heart of greed 160
Might ope, and their bounty flow, and more than before through
her deed [stirred.

The hearts of her lord and her child might with reverent love be
And she somewhat dreamily smiled, and musing she spake the word:
"Eurynomê, fain is my heart, as it never hath been before,
To appear to the suitors, albeit I hate them exceeding sore.
A word to my son would I speak to deliver his soul from harm,
That he trust him no more to the place where the arrogant suitors
swarm; [bane."

For they speak fair words to his face, but their hearts are devising his
And Eurynomê, stewardess-handmaid, answered the queen again:
"Yea, wisely and well, my child, hast thou uttered thy bosom's
thought. [170

Go then, and speak the word to thy son, and hide it not.
Be thy body bathed, and anointed thy cheeks, or ever thou go;
But let them not see thee with face furrow-stained from the fountains
of woe;

For evil it is to be grieving without surcease for aye.
Lo, now thy request is granted wherein thou wert wont to pray,
That thy son a bearded man might gladden thy living eyes."

Answered and spake unto her Penelopê passing-wise:
"Eurynomê, counsel not this, how tender soever thy care,
That I bathe my limbs and anoint me with unguent rich and rare.
For the Deathless ruined my beauty, the Gods in Olympus that
dwell, 180

Since the day that he went in his galleys over the wide sea-swell.

But bid thou Autonoë come, and Hippodameia withal,
To the end they may stand beside me amidst of the banqueting-hall ;
But for shame will I not go alone unto where men revel and brawl."

So the ancient stewardess passed from the bower : though the
palace she hied,

To bid the handmaids haste unto queen Penelopé's side.

But Athenê with eyes grey-gleaming of this thing too bethought her,
That she sent the sleep-dews streaming adown on Icarius' daughter.
Into dreamland she floated away, and relaxed with a restful smile
Were her limbs on the couch as she lay ; and the Goddess gave her
the while 190

Gifts of celestial grace to enthrall the Achæans thereby ;

And she bathed the sweet sad face with the charm of the Dwellers
on high,

Even such as anointeth queen Cytherea the beautiful-crowned,
When she goes to the fairy green where the Graces' dance sweeps
round.

And Athenê made her height and her breadth more stately to see,
And her skin more flawless-white than the smooth-sawn ivory.

So wrought she unseen ; and light from the chamber flitted she.

From the hall anigh to the door the white-armed handmaids drew,
And their voices entered before them, that sleep from the queen's
eyes flew : [said : 200

And she wiped her cheeks bright-glowing adown with her hands, and
" O soft was the rest that hath folded me round in mine anguish
dread !

Ah that a death as gentle by stainless Artemis' dart

This moment were dealt me, that nevermore with mourning heart
I might waste and pine with yearning for all the glory gone,
For the dear lost husband, of all the Achæans the noblest one ! "

Down from her bright bower then that lovely lady descended :

Not alone went she to the men, but by handmaidens twain attended.

So she came to the feasting-place of the suitors, that lady divine ;

And she stood by a column tall of the richly-carven hall,

Holding in front of her face her headveil dainty and fine ; 210

And a trusty handmaid stood by the queen upon either side.

And their knees were loosed with desire, and with love were their
souls afire, [bride :

And a tumult stirred their blood with the hope of so queenly a

But she turned in reproachful mood to her dear-loved son, and she
cried : [ness now ?

" Telemachus, where is the strength of thy heart and thy steadfast-
When thou wert but a lad, more wit in discerning the right hadst
thou. [man ;

Lo, now art thou stalwart and tall, and art grown to the stature of

Yea, the outland wight whose eye should thy stately comeliness scan

Would say that a happy sire had begotten so goodly a son :

But thy wisdom is overworn, and thine heart astray hath gone. 220

Lo, what a deed is this that within these halls hath been done,
That thou shouldst have suffered a stranger-wight to be outraged
thus!

How then if a stranger-guest in our palace sitting with us
Gat sore hurt, buffeted thus in cruel shameful wise?

Thou shouldst be but a byword, a thing of scorn in all men's eyes!"

And Telemachus prudent of wit spake out to the queen and replied:
"My mother, thou doest well to be angry at this and to chide:

Yet still have I skill to discern, and my knowledge remaineth still;

But I was but a child erewhile in dividing the good from the ill. [230

Yet I cannot in all things be wise, and I err in mine heart's despite;

For these with amazement bewilder me, thronging to left and to
right;

And the thoughts of their hearts are evil, and helpers with me are
there none.

Yet as touching the strife of the stranger and Irus, it was not done
As the suitors willed; but the stranger the mightier proved of the
twain.

O Zeus Allfather, Athenê, Apollo! my heart is fain

That now the suitors that vex our robber-haunted home

Were helplessly drooping their vanquished heads, in the forecourt
some, [sort

And some in the house, and their knees were loosed in the self-same

As Irus, who sitteth yonder hard by the gates of the court,

Helplessly swaying his head like a drunken man's down-hung, 240

Strengthless to stand on his feet, like a weed on the mixen flung:

To his home he cannot return, for his limbs are all unstrung."

In such wise mother and son in the midst of the feast-hall spoke.

But Eurymachus gazing upon the queen into praises broke:

"O child of Icarius' line, Penelopê passing-wise,

If all the Achæans in Argos on thee should cast their eyes,

Many a suitor beside in thy palace halls would there be

Feasting to-morrow: for none other woman is like unto thee,

None other so lovely and tall nor so wise, O heart's desire!"

Answered Penelopê passing-wise to the smooth-faced liar: 250

"Ah no, Eurymachus, all my beauty and goodlihead

The Deathless destroyed, when over the waters the Argives sped

Unto Troy, and with them mine husband Odysseus passed oversea.

Ah should he come back again, a defender of mine and me,

Greater than ever then and fairer were my renown.

But now have I anguish; for troubles untold have the Gods sent
down.

Ah me, I remember the hour when he left his fatherland,

How mine husband spake unto me, on my right wrist laying his hand:

'My wife, I deem that Achaia's goodly-harnessed host

Shall not all scatheless return triumphant from Troyland coast: 260

For they say that the Trojan warriors are mighty men in the fight;

They hurl the javelin true, and they speed the arrow's flight;

But the men to the winsome song and the light dance turned for
their mirth ;

And they revelled throughout the hall till the shadows of even should fall ;

And, as wantoned the rioting throng, came the darkness over the earth.

In the halls they rear straightway three cressets flaring high
Over the revel and lay ; about them were billets dry,
And sapless logs by the keen bill cleft, right swift to burn,
With pine-brands there-between ; and the maids of Odysseus in
turn 310

Those great hall-beacons fed. But he deemed it a shameful thing ;
And spake to the damsels and said the manifold-counselled king :

“ Handmaids of Odysseus, the king of his folk long time unseen,
Get you away to the chamber where sitteth your lady the queen,
And turn ye the distaff beside her, or card with your hands the wool :
Yea, womanlike sit in her bower, and so shall her joy be full.

And I will feed the cressets for all these feasting here. [appear,
Yea, though they should revel on till the fair-throned Dawning
They shall not outweary me, toil-tireless and hardy to bear.”

But they looked on each other, and smiled with wicked-laughing
eyes ; 320

And the fair Melantho reviled the hero in shameful wise :
Dolius' daughter was she, yet the queen as a babe of her own
Nursed her : she played at her knee in the innocent child-days gone :
Yet Penelopé's grief ne'er came upon her, nor the shadow thereof ;
But she wrought the deed of shame, and Eurymachus had her
love :

And now doth she fling on Odysseus the king foul taunt and scoff :
“ Thou pitiful stranger-wretch ! some brain-struck wight thou art,
Who hast no will to thy sleep in the coppersmith's forge to depart,
Or where other such varlets gossip, but thou must be babbling here
Unabashed in the presence of princes, and hast nor shame nor
fear ! 330

Good sooth, but the wine hath o'ermastered thine head—or belike
ever thus

Were thy witless wits, and thou pratest thy folly from ancient use.
Art thou mad with the pride of laying Irus the beggar low ?

Take heed lest a mightier champion than Irus arise thy foe,
To deal on thine head with his stalwart hands blows many and
sore, [gore.”

And to drive thee forth of the house with thy face bedabbled in

Answered Odysseus the manifold-counselled frowning grim :

“ I will go to Telemachus, bold-faced wanton, and tell unto him
What things thou art saying, and so shall he cut thee limb from
limb.” [speech : 340

Then the women shivered with dread at his stern deep-thrilling
And like fluttered birds they fled, and shook the knees of each :

For their hearts within them said that his threat might well befall.

But Odysseus stood and fed the cressets that flamed in the hall ;

And he gazed on the throng, nor spake; but the surge of his
thoughts tossed high [ing nigh.

With the wind of his wrath awake and the storm of revenge draw-
But Athenê let not the rout of the arrogant suitors refrain

From heart-stinging taunt and flout, to the end that the goad of pain
In the heart of Odysseus the king of the isle-folk should rankle and
sting :

So Eurymachus turned to the rest, and against Odysseus he spake
A scoff and a bitter jest, and the laughter loud outbrake : 350

“ Hear me, ye suitors that woo the fair queen world-renowned,
To the end I may speak the words that my heart for my lips hath
found.

The hand of a God is at work in this man’s coming, I deem ;
For the light of the torches streams in a very glory-gleam
From his radiant head, unveiled by a single straggling hair ! ”
Then he turned to Odysseus the city-waster, and sneered on him
there :

“ Stranger, say, wouldst thou serve with a master, even with me,
On a lone farm-stead—thine hire should be paid, fair wage and
free—

Piling the stones of the dyke and planting the sapling-tree ?
Nought shouldst thou lack : I would give thee abundant store of
meat, 360

I would clothe thy body with raiment and give thee shoes for thy
feet. [no will

Not thou ! thou hast learnt but the trade of the rogue : thou hast
To toil as a honest man, but, crouching and cringing still,
Thou lookest by begging to fill the maw that nothing can fill.”

And to him Odysseus the manifold-counselled made answer again :
“ Eurymachus, would we were matched in the toil of the field, we
twain, [stands deep,

In the spring, when the days wax long and the lush meadow-grass
And I stood in the swathe bowed over a great scythe’s mighty sweep,
And thou with another, to make assay of our prowess so,

Fasting till gloaming-tide, and there lacked not grass to mow : 370
Or had we but oxen to drive, yea, the goodliest beasts that be,

Glossy of hide, great-girthed, full-fed on the pasture-lea,
Teams even-matched in age and in draught, and tireless of toil,
And our shares in a four-acre field went swiftly cleaving the soil,
Thou shouldst see how the straight clean furrows should lengthen
behind my plough. [now,

Or if Zeus brought war on the land, and the foe came down on us
And I, even I, had a shield and the warrior’s lances two,
And the glittering brass of the morion over my temples drew,
Far afront shouldst thou see me stemming the on-rushing billows
of men, [be-glutton me then ! 380

And the mock should be dead on thy white lips—thou wouldst not
Go to, thou heartless scorner ; O soul unacquainted with ruth !

Thou deemest thyself some great one, a mighty man, forsooth,
For that few be thy fellows, and they little-hearted and deedless of
hand :

But O if Odysseus should come, should return to his fatherland,
In a moment the doorway's stately breadth should be all too strait
For the haste of thy dastard feet fleeing forth to the porchway gate."

So he spake ; but Eurymachus' soul with a madness of anger was
stirred, [word :

And he glared with a murderous scowl as he loosed the swift-winged
"O wretch, thou shalt never go scatheless for that thou hast spoken
here [390

Unabashed in the presence of princes, and hast nor shame nor fear.
Good sooth, but the wine hath o'ermastered thine head—or belike
ever so [trow !

Were thy witless wits, and thou still must be prating thy folly, I
Art thou mad with the pride of laying Irus the beggar low ? "

So cried he, and furiously he caught up a footstool to fling :

But with wary heed by the knee of Amphinomus crouched the king,
And over his head it whirled, but it crashed with a stroke full sore
On the cupbearer's hand, and it hurled the clanging bowl to the floor.
And the lad with a woeful shriek staggered backward and fell to the
ground. [shadowy hall,

And the suitors with tumult and brawl were loud through the
And thus 'gan some of them speak as they turned to their fellows
around : 400

"O that the vagabond stranger had perished beyond the sea
Ere he cast his brand of confusion amongst our revelry !

Lo how we brawl for a beggar's sake ! The hall-glee now
Of the glorious banquet must die if the best to the worst shall bow."

Out spake in the midst of them all Telemachus' sacred might :

"Sirs, ye are mad, and the meat and the wine of your feast this
night

Bewrayeth itself. Ye are driven by a God in your own despite !
Ye have banqueted : get you gone, so soon as ye list, to your rest ;
But for no man's pleasure I drive from Odysseus' hall any guest."

So the brave young voice rang clear, and biting their lips they
heard, 410

Half wondering, half in fear, that stout and defiant word.

But Amphinomus cried to the rest, and he uttered his counselling—
Son of Nisus and goodliest of the line of Arêtus the king :—

"Friends, no man sure would be wroth for a just word spoken
aright, [and spite.

To requite it with railing speech and with thoughts of mischief
Meddle not with the stranger, nor buffet, nor any beside of the thralls
That pass to and fro in your sight in the hero Odysseus' halls.

Let the cupbearer pour us the drops of libation, our banquet to end ;
And so will we pour to the Gods, and home to our sleep will we
wend.

But the stranger-wight in the halls of Odysseus leave we alone 420
In Telemachus' hands, for the house and the guest-right thereof are
his own." [fain.

So spake he, and all at the board that sat of his counsel were
And the hero Mulus poured and mingled the wine again—

The Dulichian herald of lord Amphinomus' princely train;—

Then for guest after guest he filled: to the Deathless Ones divine
The drops of libation they spilled, and they drank of the honey-
sweet wine: [tent,

And when, the libations done, they had drunk to their hearts' con-
Homeward away each one to his rest through the gloaming went.

BOOK XIX.

How Penelope knew not Odysseus, but the old nurse knew,
by the scar.

IN the hush of the darkening hall Odysseus the godlike stayed,
Plotting the suitors' fall, with Pallas Athenê's aid. [say:
And the winged words leapt to his lips, and thus to his son did he
"Telemachus, now must we hide all weapons of war away :
Leave none behind, and a guileful answer of soft words frame,
When the suitors shall miss their sheen, and shall ask thee touching
the same : [more
'I have taken them out of the smoke,' say thou, 'for they seem no
Like those that Odysseus left when he sailed for the Trojan shore,
But marred, wherever the wreaths of the fire-reek went to roll.
And another fear and a greater Kronion hath put in my soul, 10
Lest perchance ye be heated with wine, and ye break into strife and
jar, [mar :
And ye wound one another, and shame the feast, and your wooing
For the steel of itself hath a spell, and it draweth men on unto war.'"
He spake ; and the son, to obey his father's command, forth sped ;
And he called Eurycleia the grey nurse forth from within, and he
said :
"Mother, come keep me the maids in our halls aloof from us here,
To the end I may store in a chamber my father's battle-gear,
The fair arms lying so long unheeded and smoke-defiled,
While my sire was afar from his home, and myself was nought but
a child ; [20
But now shall they gather soil no more from the hearth-fire's reek."
And in answer to him did his dear nurse Eurycleia speak :
"Ah but I would, my son, thou wouldst rouse thee at last to stand
In defence of thine house, and wouldst guard thine own from the
spoil's hand !
But tell me, who shall thy torchbearer be as thou toil'st in the night,
If thou wilt not suffer the handmaids, who else had given thee light ?"
And Telemachus prudent of spirit answered the woman and said :

"Even this stranger ; for none shall in idleness eat of my bread,
But my bounty his toil must requite, though he come as a far-strayed
guest." [breast ;

Unwinged was the word as for flight, and it sank deep into her
Now the doors of the great hall fast hath she barred, and thereupon
Upriseth Odysseus in haste, upriseth his glorious son. [30

And the war-shields boss-bestudded and helmets forth they bore

And the thirsty spears unblooded : Athenê glided before

With a golden lamp, that shed all round its beautiful rays.

And Telemachus suddenly said to his father in wildered amaze :

"O father, what marvel of marvels here of our eyes is seen !

Lo, how the walls of the hall, and the spaces the columns between,

And the beams and the rafters of fir, and the pillars' stately height,

As though they were burning with fire, are aglow with unearthly
light !

Surely a God is within, of the dwellers in heaven-dome wide." 40

But Odysseus the manifold-counselled spake unto him and replied :

"Keep silence, and bridle thy thoughts, and question nothing thereof.

Lo, this is the wont of the Gods who abide in Olympus above.

Now pass thou away to thy rest ; but here will I yet remain,

That my story may kindle the hearts of the queen and her hand-
maid-train ;

For thy mother will ask me of all, in her sorrow and yearning pain."

So he heedeth his father's behest, and forth is Telemachus gone

From the hall to his chamber of rest,—and before him the torches
shone,— [borne :

To the bed where erst he had lain by the sweetness of sleep over-

There now is he resting again, and he waiteth the blessed morn. 50

In the hush of the darkening hall Odysseus the godlike stayed ;

Plotting the suitors' fall with Pallas Athenê's aid. [gone ;

Now Penelopê passing-wise from her bower to the feast-hall is

As Artemis fair to the eyes, or as Aphroditê, she shone. [brought

And to where the hearth-fire burned, a couch for their lady they

Of silver and ivory turned, which the craftsman Icmalius wrought.

And all of the selfsame piece a footstool he added thereto

For the feet of the queen ; and a fleece soft-carded thereover they
threw.

So the lady of the land sat down on the fashioned chair :

And the white-armed handmaid-band, from the hall of the women,
there 60

'Gan clear the broken bread and the tables fragment-spread,

And the cups, whence a little before men drank amid rioting wild.

And brands did they cast on the floor from the cressets : thereover
they piled [night.

Faggot and billet, for light and for heat through the shades of the

And Melantho turned once more on Odysseus and foully reviled :

"Stranger, still through the night wilt thou here be vexing us thus,

Prowling about the palace, and playing the spy upon us ?

Out ! get thee forth, thou wretch, and feast on thy beggar's store,
Lest a torch be the rod that shall smite thee and drive from the
palace-door."

Stern frowning answered Odysseus the manifold-counselled wight :
" Thou quean, what hast thou to do to browbeat me in thy spite ?
Is it because I am evil-arrayed and foul to the sight, [unto :
And go begging from door to door ? I am even constrained there-
For thus must the beggar and homeless wanderer ever do.
Time was when I in a princely palace was wont to live,
A wealthy man, and oft to the wanderer then would I give,
Whosoever he were, whatsoever his need, it mattered not :
I had thralls untold, and with all things else was my bliss full-fraught
That are found with the men that are rich and are praised for a
happy lot.

But Zeus brought ruin, for so was his pleasure concerning me. So
Wherefore beware thou too, lest thy bravery perish from thee,
Wherein thou surpassest the rest of the maidens thy fellows that
be ; [thee and burn,
Lest the flame of the wrath of the queen should be kindled upon
Or Odysseus should come, for yet is there hope of the hero's return.
But and if he hath perished, if never again they shall look on his
face,

Yet the son in his goodlihead is alive by Apollo's grace ;
And the woman that waxeth wanton, and lifteth a shameless brow,
Shall Telemachus mark ; for the days of his childhood are gone by
now."

And Penelopê passing-wise heard all that the hero spake ; [90
And she turned with flashing eyes, and her words of wrath outbrake :
" Never think, O thou reckless and bold-faced, that I shall forgive
or forget [yet !
The deed of presumption and spite that thine head shall atone for
For thou knewest, full well thou knewest, Penelopê's heart was
fain— [gain
Thou heardest me say it—to ask of the stranger, some tidings to
Of my husband, seeing mine heart is full of unresting pain."

Then to the stewardess-handmaid Eurynomê turned she, and said :
" Eurynomê, bring thou a chair, and thereover a fleece shalt thou
spread, [turn
And thereon shall the stranger sit, and shall tell me his tale ; and in
Shall he hearken to me when I ask of the thing mine heart would
learn."

She spake, and a polished chair did the stewardess bring with
And she set it before her there, and a fleece thereover she cast.
So there in his beggar-guise sat Odysseus the godlike man :
And Penelopê passing-wise with eager words began :

" Stranger, of all things first this thing would I have thee say :
Who art thou ?—thy nation ?—thy city and parents, where be
they ? "

And Odysseus the manifold-counselled answered the queen and replied :

“ O queen, no mortal of all on the earth-plain boundless-wide
May find any fault in thee, for thy fame to the heavens hath soared,
As the fame of a glorious king, a god-revering lord,
Who ruleth a mighty people and strong in the battle-field, 110
And maintaineth righteousness, and the earth doth her increase
yield

Of wheat and of barley and fruit low-curving the laden trees,
And of flocks in the meadows, and fish poured forth from the teeming seas,

Because of his justice ; and wise are his people to do that is right.
Wherefore, I pray thee, of other things question me here this night ;
But seek not to know of my race and the land that fostered me ;
Lest remembrance burden my spirit the more with misery.

Forlorn are my days and sigh-laden ; but surely unseemly were this,
Lamenting to sit in the hall of strangers, and shadow their bliss.
For an evil thing it is without surcease to mourn. 120

The servants, yea thou thyself, might behold me with anger and scorn, [with wine.’”

Saying, ‘ These be the drunkard’s tears, for the man is but heavy

Answered the wise-heart queen, the child of a kingly line :

“ Ah stranger, no, but all my beauty and goodlihead
The Deathless destroyed, when over the waters the Argives sped
Unto Troy, and with them mine husband Odysseus passed oversea.
Ah, should he come back again, a defender of mine and me,
Greater than ever then and fairer were my renown :

But now have I anguish, for troubles untold have the Gods sent down.
For all the chieftains that rule in the islands lying around, 130

Dulichium, Samè, Zacynthus moreover, the forest-crowned,
And all the princes that dwell in Ithaca’s far-seen isle, [spoil.

All these come wooing,—I loathe them,—the house they devour and
Therefore to strangers’ and suppliants’ stories I give no heed,
Nor to tidings of heralds whose voices be helpful in time of need.

But I yearn for Odysseus : mine heart is pining my bosom within ;
And my suitors press me hard, but the threads of guile I spin :

First did a God put a thought in mine heart to escape from my doom,
Even to weave in mine halls a web at a stately loom,

Ample and fine of thread, and straightway I answered and said : 140
‘ Youths, suitors to me, since verily godlike Odysseus is dead,

Tarry, how eager soe’er for my bridal, until I have wrought
A shroud,—for I would not the work of mine hands should come to naught,—

A winding-sheet for the hero Laertes, against the day [away ;
When the baneful doom of the outstretcher Death shall snatch him

Lest Achaia’s daughters at me should in indignation be loud,
If he, after all his wealth, should be lying without a shroud.’

So did I speak, and lightly consented their lordly will :

There through the day at the great tall web was I weaving still :
 But at night I unravelled it all, with the torches beside me set. 150
 Three years by my wiles were they baffled, and none mistrusted me
 yet :

But at last when the fourth year beheld the seasons onward glide,
 As the months waned fast, and many a day was born and died,
 Then, through my handmaids, the queans that had no care for me,
 They came on me there and caught me, and chode with me bitterly.
 Thus in my heart's despite perforce I finished it.

And now can I nowise escape this marriage, and faileth my wit
 For any device beside ; and my parents are urging me sore
 To be wedded, and chafeth my son at the wasters of his store : [160
 Yea, he seeth and understandeth ; for now unto man is he grown,
 For a warder of the house and a winner of hero-renown.
 Howbeit tell of thy birth and thy land ; for not of the stock
 Of an oak-tree old in story art thou, nor the child of a rock."

And Odysseus the manifold-counselled spake to her answering :
 " O noble wife of Odysseus the son of Laertes the king,
 Will nothing content thee but this, the race of the stranger to know ?
 Be it so : I will tell thee :—ah me, thou art whelming me deeper in
 woe !

Well may the grief-tide swell, when a man must speak of the home
 From the which for so weary a while his feet have been forced to
 roam,

Tossed ever from city to city forlorn in misery. 170

Howbeit my tale will I tell, and the thing that thou askest of me.
 There lieth a land in the midst of the wash of the dark sea-swell,
 The fair fat land of Crete ; and the folk in that isle that dwell
 Are a host untold, and cities have they fourscore and ten :
 And their speech is of divers tongues : therein be Achæan men,
 Great-hearted Eteocretans, Cydonians bow-renowned,
 Crest-tossing Dorians, and godlike Pelasgians there be found.
 There standeth Cnossus the mighty, where reigned in days gone by
 Nine glorious years King Minos, the friend of Zeus most high,
 The sire of my mighty-hearted father Deucalion, 180
 Of whose loins withal Idomeneus sprang to sit on his throne.

But he went in the hook-prowed ships for the sons of Atreus' fame,
 Unto Ilium to northward. And Aethon they called my glorious
 name ;

Yet, seeing that I was the younger, they counted him ever the best.
 Even there I beheld Odysseus, and gave him the gifts of a guest.
 For the might of the wind had carried him down to the land of
 Crete,

Buffeting wide of Maleia his Troyward-speeding fleet :

So by Eilithyia's cave in Amnisus anchor he cast,
 In a perilous roadstead and scanty screened from the wrath of the
 blast. [190

To the city he hasted, and then of Idomeneus sought he to hear ;

For he said that in love and in worship he held the king full dear.
 O'er late did he come, for by then 'twas the tenth or eleventh dawn
 Since the chief in the beak-prowed galleys to Ilium's shore had gone.
 Then I took to mine halls thy lord with princely welcoming,
 And entreated him kindly, and gave of my wealth the gifts of a king.
 Yea, to him and his battle-fellows that followed the hero to war
 Did I give of the meal from the garner and flame-flushed wine good
 store,

And oxen to slaughter for meat, that their soul might be satisfied.
 There did the godlike Achæans for twelve days' space abide,
 Weather-bound by a hurricane north-wind : none on the earth might
 stand 200

For the fury thereof ; for therein was a God's afflicting hand.
 But the wind on the thirteenth fell, and the galleys sailed from the
 land."

So framed he manifold lies subtle-fashioned in truthful seeming.
 But the tears ran down from her eyes, and her wasted cheeks were
 streaming. [abroad

And as from a mountain's crown the snow, that was scattered
 By the west-wind, wasteth adown to the plains, by the east-wind
 thawed ;

And as fadeth its dazzling gleam the rivers swell broad-sweeping ;
 So wasted her cheeks as the stream ran fast of her bitter weeping,
 As she wept for her lost beloved, who sat even then by her knee.
 And the soul of Odysseus was moved with ruth her tears to see ; 210
 But his eyes were steadfast-set as horn or as steel the while :
 No quiver, nor eyelash wet betrayed him, the perfect in guile.
 But as soon as the heavy pain at her heart had been eased by her
 tears,

She lifted her face again, and she spake in Odysseus' ears :
 " Now stranger, now, I ween, will I make assay of thy truth,
 If my lord with his godlike warrior-mates in very sooth
 Were guests at the feast in thine halls afar, as sayeth thy word ;—
 Tell me what manner of vesture arrayed the limbs of my lord,
 And what manner of man he was, and they of his war-fellow train."

Answering spake unto her subtle-witted Odysseus again ; 220
 " Hard is it for one that beheld him but once, and long ago,
 To tell of his presence ; for now 'tis the twentieth year, I trow,
 Since he turned from mine halls, and passed from my fatherland far
 oversea.

Yet will I tell how cometh aback his image to me.
 A mantle Odysseus the godlike wore in fold over fold ;
 Crimson it was, thick-woven, and clasped by a brooch of gold
 With sockets twain, and the face thereof full cunningly wrought ;
 For thereon was a hound, and a fawn beneath his forefeet caught ;
 And he glared on the prey as it writhed, men marvelled looking
 thereon, [the fawn, 230
 How the gold was alive, how the deerhound glared as he strangled

Which convulsively kicked with its feet in agonised strain to be free.
 And I marked how the garment glanced on his body radiantly ;
 Fine as the rind that enfoldeth a sun-dried scallion it seemed,
 So soft, so smooth was its sheen, and bright as the sun it gleamed :
 Ah, many a woman gazed thereon with wondering eye !

This too will I tell thee, and deep in thy breast let my saying lie :
 I know not if this was Odysseus' attire in his island home,
 Or was given of a friend what time he sailed thence over the foam,
 Or perchance of a stranger ; for friends had Odysseus afar and anear,
 For in all Achaia-land thou scarce shouldst find his peer. 240

And I gave him a brazen sword and a fair cloak purple-glowing,
 Double-folded, a tunic withal adown to the feet deep-flowing ;
 And with honour and worship I sent him away o'er the paths of
 the sea. [he ;

There was with him a herald that numbered a few years more than
 And for him, what manner of man he was will I tell thee now :
 Bowed in the shoulders, and swarthy, with curled locks shading his
 brow ;

And Eurybates had he to name, and far beyond the rest
 Did Odysseus regard him, for even as his own were the thoughts of
 his breast."

In the heart of the Lady anew did a passion of weeping awake,
 As she knew the tokens for true whereof Odysseus spake. 250
 So when she had eased her breast with the bitter-sweet dewfall of
 pain,

She lifted her voice, and addressed her speech to the stranger again :
 "Stranger, or ever thy story was told my compassion hadst thou ;
 But worship and love shall be thine in the halls of my palace now.
 For 'twas I, even I, that folded the garments whereof thou hast told,
 When I gave him them out of my bower, and the brooch of the
 shining gold

I laid on him, to grace him withal,—I shall welcome him never more,
 Nor see him returning home to his own dear fatherland-shore !
 Ah, in an evil day went Odysseus forth in his ship [260
 To look upon Ilium the cursèd, whose name is as gall on the lip."

Answered Odysseus to her, and the wily of wit spake on :
 "Oh queenly-noble wife of Odysseus Laertes' son,
 No longer with weeping mar thy beauty, nor pine any more
 For thy husband with heart-stricken moan : yet I blame thee not
 therefor. [would mourn

Though a man were not such as thy lord, yet the widowed woman
 For the arms that had clasped her, the husband whose children her
 bosom had borne,

Ay, for a lesser than he, who was like to the Gods as they tell ;—
 But cease from thy lamentation, and heed my saying well.
 For without fail now will I tell thee, I will not hide this word,
 How that already concerning Odysseus' return I have heard. 270
 Anigh thee awhile he abides on the wealthy Thesprot shore

Alive, and thence is he bringing abundant treasure-store.
For he asked of the folk, and they gave; but his dear-loved mates
hath he lost;

And the hollow ship went down in the dark sea tempest-tossed
As he came from Thrinacia's isle; for the anger of Zeus was his
bane, [slain.

And the wrath of the God of the Sun, whose kine his fellows had
Mid crashing of surges they perished, the deep sea found them
graves; [waves,

But he clung to the galley's keel, and was shoreward hurled by the
To the land of Phæacian folk, that are kin to the Dwellers in heaven:
And of these to Odysseus as unto a god high honour was given. 280
Many gifts they bestowed, and fain had they sent thine island-prince
Scatheless and toilless homeward; and here had he been long since,
But he counted it more for his gain to roam through many a land,
And to gather him wealth of strangers, the gifts of the bountiful
hand.

For Odysseus is wisest of men in the gain-craft's mystery,
And of all that be born but to die no master therein hath he.
Thus Pheidon, the king of the folk of Thesprotia, told unto me;
And he sware unto me, as in hall the wine of libation he poured,
That the galley was launched, and the shipmen ready to go aboard
To speed him over the seas to his own dear fatherland. 290

But he sent me away before, for a galley with Thesprots manned
For Dulichium's land wheat-wealthy was spreading her woven wing.
And he showed to me all the gathered wealth of Odysseus the king.
Good sooth, to the tenth generation his house might live thereon;
So huge was the treasure-heap that within the king's halls shone.
But Odysseus, he said, to Dodona was gone, to learn the behest
Of Zeus from the oak divine, the dark tree lofty-tressed,
Whether openly he should come unto Ithaca's fruitful isle,
Or in secret; for now had he wandered thence for a weary while.
Yea, he is safe: he shall come in a sudden-joyful day; 300
And his feet shall linger from friends and from fatherland far away
Not long: lo now with an oath I confirm the word that I say:—
Let Zeus most highest and best of the Deathless hear my word,
And the hearth whereunto I am come of Odysseus thy princely lord!
Surely in all these things shall the truth of my words be shown;
In this year, even in this, shall Odysseus come to his own,
As the old moon waneth away and the new is at point to rise."

Answered and spake unto him Penelopè passing-wise:
"Ah stranger, I would this saying of thine fulfilled might be!
Then shouldst thou know my kindness, and many a gift from me, 310
So that happy shouldst thou be accounted of whoso met with thee.
But there lies on my heart a foreboding, and so shall it fall, I trow;
Nevermore shall Odysseus come home, nor thou by our help shalt
go [hall
To the bourne that thou wouldst; for no such lords are found in our

As Odysseus the peerless of men was, if ever he lived at all,
 Who like him would speed the departing, would welcome the com-
 ing guest. [his rest

But, my handmaidens, wash ye the stranger, array ye the couch for
 With bed-gear and shining rugs, and with mantles overstrawn,
 That restful and warm he may tarry the coming of gold-throned
 Dawn.

My guest shall ye bathe and anoint at earliest morning-tide, 320
 To the end he may sit within by my son Telemachus' side,
 Feasting in hall ; and if aught of spiteful wrong shall be wrought,
 Ill shall it be for the doer, the brutal-souled, and nought
 Shall his malice avail him here, though his wrath wax never so hot.
 For how shouldst thou know me, stranger, or wot if Penelopé's
 breast

Hath wisdom above her fellows, or counsel more than the rest,
 If thou sit at the meat in a beggar's foulness and vile array
 In mine halls? Soon fadeth the flower of the life-day of man away :
 And whoso is ruthless, whose soul unto pity doth never bend,
 All pray that his ruin may come with woe at his latter end ; 330
 And over his grave the curses of all men flap dark wings.
 But whoso is noble of heart and deviseth liberal things,
 The guest and the stranger beareth afar his spreading fame
 Amongst all folk, and in men's mouths glorious groweth his name."

Made answer Odysseus to her, and the wily of wit spake on :
 "O queenly-noble wife of Odysseus Laertes' son,
 Of a truth I have had no heart for mantles glistening-gay,
 Since the hour when Crete's snow-crested mountains faded away
 In the offing, as over the surges my long-oared ship flew fast ; [340
 And fain would I lie as the sleepless nights heretofore have I passed.
 For many a night have I lain upon couches exceeding vile,
 And waited through weary hours for the gold-throned Dawning's
 smile.

Neither seem to my soul the footbath-lavers in anywise sweet ;
 Neither would I that any woman should set her hand to my feet,
 Not one of thine handmaids that ply their tasks by bower and hall,
 Except thou hast with thee a woman old and discreet withal,
 Whose spirit as mine hath been hardship-burdened and woe-fordone ;
 I would not begrudge that my feet should be handled by such an
 one."

Answered Penelopé passing-wise to the hero divine :
 "Friend stranger, never ere this hath there come to this hall of
 mine, 350
 Midst the welcome wayfarers from far, any man so wise as thou ;
 So passing discreet are the words that thy wise lips utter now.
 Now an aged woman in spirit exceeding prudent have I,
 Which bare on her knees that hapless man in the days gone by :
 Her hands were the first that held him and hushed his new-born
 wail.

Even she shall wash thy feet, albeit her strength is but frail.
Come now, stand up on thy feet, Eurycleia the passing-wise :
Wash him that is old as thy lord :—yea, such, as it seems in mine
eyes,

Are the feet of Odysseus by this, and such shall my lord's hands be ;
For eld soon boweth the folk that be compassed with misery." 360

Then the woman exceeding old did her face with her thin hands
hide ; [cried :

Hot tears through her fingers rolled, as the word of lamenting she
" Ah me for my helpless love ! dear son, how Zeus hath abhorred
Above all men the man that hath loved him, and given him hate
for reward !

Never yet to the Thunder-lover hath any man burnt fat thighs
So oft, and the chosen victims of hecatomb-sacrifice,
As thou didst render, and ever didst pray to be led safe on
To an eld of peace and of bliss, and to rear thee a glorious son.
And now hath he taken the day of return from thee—thee only !
Even now, it may be, is my lord in a far land friendless and lonely,
In a princely palace, the while the scornful handmaids jeer, [370
Even as these, the shameless, have all made mock at thee here.
Thou shrinkest aback from the flouts and the manifold scoffs of the
train, [fain

That thou sufferest not that they wash thee ; but this will I do full
At the hest of Icarius' daughter, the lady in wisdom divine.
For her sake therefore thy feet will I wash, yea also for thine ;
For mine heart within me is tossed by a tempest of cares to-day.
But come now, hearken the word that my lips are moved to say :
Full many a woe-worn stranger hath come to our halls, I wis ;
Yet never beheld I another save thee so like him ere this : 380
For in stature, in voice, and in feet, thou art even as Odysseus is."

Swiftly made answer Odysseus in manifold counsels wise : [eyes
" Yea mother, so ever they say, even all that have seen with their
Us twain, how that wondrous like we are in outward seeming,
As thyself hast discerned of thy wisdom, and utterest forth thy
deeming." [her lord,

Then the handmaid old, for the washing of him that she knew not
Brought the laver of brass broad-flashing ; cold water therein hath
she poured, [fire's glow :
And she mingled the hot therewithal, and he sat by the hearth-
Yet he turned him that shadow should fall on his face and his limbs
below ; [scar betray, 390

For there flashed on his spirit the thought that the light should his
And the doings in secret wrought in a moment be bared to the day.
She drew nigh, and her king she washed :—eftsoons she marketh the
scar

That a boar's white tusk had gashed long ago in the woodland war,
What time to Parnassus he came, where Autolycus dwelt with his
sons,

The sire of his mother, whose fame overpassed all earth-born ones
 In craft and in thwartwise-turning of oaths, by a God made wise ;
 For to Hermes full oft was he burning acceptable victims' thighs,
 Of lambs and of kids, and aye went the God by his friend's right
 hand.

Now Autolycus came on a day unto Ithaca's fruitful land.
 And behold, the new-born son of his daughter there he sees ; 400
 And the helpless little one Eurycleia hath set on his knees,
 When the meal of the even was done ; and she spake, and her words
 were these :

" Autolycus, find us a name thyself, and bestow it now
 On thy daughter's darling, the child of many a prayer and vow."
 And Autolycus opened his lips, and the bodeful answer came :
 " My son-in-law, and my daughter, be this the young child's name,—
 Odious is many an one unto me that have hitherward hied,
 Odious are menfolk and women on fostering earth that abide,—
 Wherefore his name be Odysseus ; and I, in the days to come,
 When a stalwart lad and tall to his mother's maidenhead-home 410
 On the slope of Parnassus, he cometh, where lieth my wealth's in-
 crease,

Thereof will I give him, and send him rejoicing thence in peace."

So went Odysseus to claim the promise of splendid gifts ;
 And Autolycus, soon as he came, with the sons of the guileful in
 shifts,

Greeted him lovingly with speech and with hands warm-grasped,
 And his granddame Amphithee to her heart Odysseus clasped ;
 And she kissed the head of the lad and both his beautiful eyne.
 And straightway Autolycus bade the sons of his glorious line [ear :
 That the supper be dight, and they to the hest of their father gave
 And they led to the court straightway a stall-fed five-year steer ; 420
 So they flayed it, and each man fell to the work, and they quartered
 the beast, [feast ;

And they carved it featly and well, and they spitted the flesh for the
 And they roasted the roast with skill, and to each his portion gave.
 So all day long, until the sun's rim dipped in the wave,
 They feasted with glee, and their soul lacked nought of the meat
 and the bowl. [deep ;

And the sun sank down in the west, and the folds of the dark hung
 And they gat them unto their rest and received the gift of sleep.

Out of her mist-veil grey the Rosy-fingered shone.
 To the hunting they hasted away, both the hounds and each tall son
 Of the prince Autolycus ; hied the godlike Odysseus with these. 430
 And they came to a steep hill-side overmantled with forest trees :
 Parnassus it was, and anon to the windy gorges they came ;
 And by this was the slant red sun just smiting the meadows with
 flame,

As he rose from the softly-fleeting Ocean-stream deep-flowing.
 And they came to a glen, ever beating the copses ; before them going

The sleuth-hounds followed the scent, and behind them with eager tread

The sons of Autolycus went, and among them Odysseus sped
 Hard after the hounds full fast, with his javelin aquiver to slay.
 And a tangled copse at the last they found, where a huge boar lay.
 No winds blowing mistily-wet through that thick covert could pierce,
 Nor the dash of the shower, nor yet the sun, were he never so fierce,
 So thickly the boughs overhead intertwined; and abundantly there
 Great wealth of leaves had been shed in the acre-waster's lair.
 And the tramp of the hunters' feet came around, and the hounds'
 deep bay [straightway;

As they pressed on him: forth to meet them he leapt from his lair
 And bristling high his crest, while the fire from his red eyes flashed,
 Stood at bay: but before the rest on the brute had Odysseus dashed.
 And the long spear high did he lift in his brawny hand fast gripped,
 Eager to stab him; but swift as the lightning the monster hath
 ripped

His thigh by the knee, and the tush a ghastly gash hath rent, 450
 As he caught him with sidelong rush, yet not to the bone it went.
 But Odysseus stabbed him between right shoulder and ribs with the
 brass, [lin pass.

And clean through the breast did the keen-flashing point of the jave-
 Down was he hurled to the ground with a scream, and his life fled
 away.

And Autolycus' sons came round, and they brittled the mighty prey:
 And the godlike Odysseus' wound with the leech-craft hunters know
 Deftly and wisely they bound, and they stanch'd the dark blood's
 flow

By a spell-chant marvellous, and home to their father they wended.
 So there of Autolycus and his sons was Odysseus tended,
 And was healed of his hurt, and they gave rich gifts and rare to
 their guest. 460

And a glad good-speed they wave, as he goeth with gladsome breast
 To the dear-loved isle where his sire and his mother hail their son
 With exceeding joy, and enquire touching deeds in the far land done.
 And they ask him concerning the scar, and the tale thereof he tells,—
 Of the wild-boar's lightning leap, of the white tusk gashing deep,
 When he went to the woodland war in Parnassus' shadowy dells.

That limb hath the old nurse ta'en, and her palms the scar en-
 fold,— [slipped from her hold!

She hath touched it,—she knows it again,—lo his foot, it hath
 On the laver's edge did it fall, and the brass-clang rang through the
 hall, [470

As swaying and sliding it rolled: on the floor was the water spilled.
 But rapture and anguish laid hold on her spirit: her eyes were filled
 With tears; and, passion-clutched, was her throat too strait for a
 cry; [ly:

But the beard of Odysseus she touched, and she gasped forth eager-

"Oh thou art he!—thou art very Odysseus my darling son!—
And I knew not my lord till mine hands had rested his body upon!"

Yet quivered her lips with the word as her eyes on the queen she cast,

Being fain to tell how her lord and her love was at home at the last.
But the queen could not glance thither at all, nor at all give heed;
For Athenê turned elsewhither her thoughts: but in desperate need
Her throat hath Odysseus caught with his right in a giant grip, 480
And her face unto his hath he brought with his left; and with stern-
set lip,

"Nurse, wouldst thou slay me?" he said, "and for this didst thou
bear me in vain

On thy bosom, who now, after manifold toil, after measureless pain,
In the twentieth year am come to the land of my fathers again?
But since thou hast known me, and seeing a God put it into thy
thought,

Keep silence, that none beside in mine halls thereof know aught.
Else, this do I tell thee—yea also my saying accomplished shall be:—
If so be that a God shall subdue the suitors under me,
Even thee will I spare not, albeit my nurse thou art, in the hour
When I give death-wage to the handmaids that shame us in hall
and bower." 490

Made answer to him Eurycleia the passing-wise, and she said:
"My son, what saying is this through the fence of thy teeth that
hath fled! [will;

Thou knowest how steadfast my spirit is, not to be bowed is my
Stubborn as flint or as iron thy secret will I guard still.

This thing will I tell thee moreover, and deep in thine heart be it
stored:

If so be that a God shall o'ermaster beneath thee the foes of my
lord,

Unto thee will I then tell over the women thine halls within, [sin."
Both them that be daughters of shame, and them that be stainless of

But the man of the manifold shifts unto her spake answering:

"Nurse, why wilt thou name them?—no need hast thou to do this
thing. 500

I, even I, will mark each one with diligent heed.

Thou hold thy peace, and leave to the Gods to order the deed."

Then the old nurse answered nought, but forth of the hall hath
she hasted; [wasted.

And footbath-water she brought, for that all the first had been
So when she had washen his feet, and with oil had anointed them
o'er,

Odysseus drew him a seat anigh to the hearth once more
For warmth: and, the scar to screen, his tatters thereover he spread.
Then spake the fair sad queen, and the wise Penelopê said:

"Stranger, a little yet would I talk with thee alone; [510
For the night and the calm sweet slumber-tide cometh hastily on—

Yea, sweet to the sorrowful ones that be lulled in the arms of sleep.
But on me hath a God cast trouble and anguish, a measureless heap ;
For mourning and moans are my solace by day, while, hour after
hour,

Sick-hearted I labour and look to mine handmaids in hall and bower :
But when night cometh down at the last, and all folk sink into rest,
I lie on my couch ; but the throng of the care-ghosts haunteth my
breast

With sharp goads pricking my heart, that I wail, ah, bitterly wail.
As the daughter of Pandareus, the brown bright nightingale,
Trilleth her lovely song in the flush of the new-born Spring,
In the tree, as she sitteth mid twilight of leaves thick-clustering, 520
And with wavering change upon change is her echoing song-flood
poured, [sword,

As she mourneth her darling, her Itylus, slain by her hand with the
Slain long ago by her folly, the child of Zethus the king ;
So my heart is divided in twain ; to and fro is it wavering,—
Whether to bide with my son and to watch over everything,
Even my substance and thralls and the high-roofed stately house,
Having respect to the voice of the folk and the bed of my spouse,
Or to yield me a bride, and to follow the noblest Achæan and best
Of my wooers, whose measureless gifts in mine halls overpass the
rest. [heart, 530

And my son, while he yet was a child unmighty of hand and of
Suffered me not to be wed, from the home of my lord to depart.
But now is he waxen great, and hath reached fair manhood's flower ;
And behold, he prayeth me now to depart from hall and bower :
For his spirit is wroth for his substance that lawless Achæans devour.
But prithee interpret my dream, and hearken with diligent heed :
I have twenty geese, and they come to the water-trough to feed
On the wheat that I cast them, and gazing my sad heart warms
with delight.

Now a mighty crook-beaked eagle swooped from a mountain height ;
And he brake the necks of them all, and he slew them : in heaps
they lay

Dead in mine halls, and to heaven's blue depth he soared away. 540
And I wept and I shrieked in my dream for sorrow and sore dismay,
And around me thronging came the fair-tressed daughters of Greece,
At my piteous lamenting because that the eagle had slain my geese.
On a sudden the spoiler returned, and he sat on a hall-roof beam ;
With the voice of a man did he still my wailing, and cried in my
dream :

‘ O child of Icarius, queen far-famous, have no fear !
No dream, but a vision is this, whereof the fulfilment is near.
The geese are the suitors : and I am the eagle that late was their
bane,

But now am thine husband, returned unto home and to thee again ;
And a doom of shame will I deal unto all the suitor-train.’ 550

So spake he, and slid from my eyelids slumber's honey-dew ;
 And I looked, and lo, the geese in the court-yard full in view
 Pecking their wheat at the trough, as before they wont to do."

Answering her Odysseus the manifold-counselled said :

" Lady, as touching thy dream, the riddle cannot be read
 By wresting it otherwise : of Odysseus' self thou hast heard
 The fulfilment thereof : therein for the suitors hath ruin appeared,
 Yea, for all ; not one of them all shall escape from doom and death."

And Penelopë passing-wise maketh answer again, and she saith :
 " Stranger, hard to interpret and wildering-dark are dreams ; 560
 And the thing men hope cometh not, nor the truth is the thing that
 seems.

For portals twain for the flitting of bodiless dreams there be,
 And the one is fashioned of horn, and the other of ivory.
 Now every dream through the ivory dead-smooth-sawn that flies
 Is a dream that shall not be fulfilled, and it bringeth a tale of lies.
 But they that come up to the earth through the horn-gate's polished
 sheen

Fail never, but bring to pass whatsoever the dreamer hath seen.
 But it was not through this one, I trow, that my weird dream came
 unto me,

Or surely a welcome thing unto me and my son would it be. [570
 This too will I tell thee, and lay thou to heart the thing that I say :
 To-morrow,—a morrow accursed above all—shall tear me away
 From Odysseus' home ; for then will I set them the archery-proof,
 The axe-play, seeing my hero of yore 'neath his feast-hall roof
 Would set twelve axes up, as the ribs of a galley arow :
 Then he shot from afar, and through all of their rings sped the shaft
 from his bow.

And now will I set this trial, the strife of the suitors to end.
 Whosoever of these with his hands shall the bow most easily bend,
 And shoot through the rings of the axes twelve ranged all in line,
 Him will I follow, forsaking this beautiful home of mine, [580
 Dear home, that knew me a bride, with its wealth of abundant store ;
 I shall never forget it, in dreams I shall see it for evermore."

Made answer Odysseus to her, and the subtle of wit spake on :
 " O queenly-noble wife of Odysseus Laertes' son,
 No longer delay this trial-contest here in thine home.
 For Odysseus the manifold-counselled, I tell thee, shall hitherward
 come,

Or ever the suitors, for all their handling the polished bow,
 Shall have strained the string, and have shot through the iron rings
 planted arow."

Then again unto him Penelopë passing-wise replied :
 " Stranger, if thou wouldst be willing to sit in mine halls at my side,
 And to gladden me, never the dews of slumber mine eyelids would
 steep.

But this may nowise be, that mortals never should sleep ;

For the Deathless ones have decreed that the season for this shall
betide

All mortal folk on the face of the corn-giving earth that abide.

And for me, to my bower will I go, and my limbs on the couch will
I lay,

The couch that is grown but a couch of sighs for the weary-hearted,
Ever made wet with my tears since the day that Odysseus departed
To look upon Ilium the cursèd, whose name I loathe to say.

There will I lie ; and within these walls shall be thy bed ; [spread.”
On the ground let it be if thou wilt, or a couch my maidens shall

Then to her glittering-bright high bower the Lady ascended. 600
Not alone did she pass from his sight ; but by handmaidens twain
attended.

Slow went she with tired sad tread till into the chamber they stept ;
And there for the dear days dead and the love of Odysseus she wept,
Till Athenè the sleep-dews shed on her weariful eyes, and she slept.

BOOK XX.

Of the last banquet of the suitors, and the death-bodings
that came in the midst of their rioting.

BUT Odysseus laid him to rest in the porchway-hall the while ;
For he spread on the ground an undressed bull-hide : and
thereover a pile

Of many a fleece of the sheep that the Greeks for their feasting slew ;
And above, when he lay as for sleep, a mantle Eurynomê threw.

So there, with thoughts of bane for the caitiff suitor-train,
Lay Odysseus, but slept not so : for the maids from the feast-hall
came, [shame.

That had wrought but a little ago with the suitors the deed of
With laughter and wanton word they came, and unmaidenly jest ;
And indignation-stirred was his spirit within his breast.

And his thoughts as the tempest-whirl raged, surged as the sea-
tide's swell : 10

Should he leap on the harlots, and hurl each guilty spirit to hell ?
Or leave them but this once more to revel in shame and in sin
With the suitors even as of yore ? and his heart growled ever within.
And even as a mother-hound, when she seeth a stranger-wight,
Goeth pacing her whelps around, and growleth afire for the fight,
So growled his heart, for the load of the horror was fearful to bear.
But he smote on his breast, and he chode with the rebel that strug-
gled there : [fuller sight

“Endure it, endure it, mine heart ! thou hast borne yet a shame-
In the day when the hideous giant, the Cyclops resistless of might,
Was devouring thy valiant companions ; yet thou wast strong to
endure, 20

Till thy wit brought thee forth of his cavern, who thoughtest thy
death was sure.”

So spake he, and mightily reined the heart that restively leapt
In his breast, and his mood he restrained and in rest unrestful kept.
Steadfast his heart was and staunch ; yet himself tossed this way
and that.

And as when one turneth a paunch filled full with blood and with fat

In front of a great fierce fire ever this way and that, and thereon
Stares with impatient desire for the roast to be speedily done,
So to this side and that side he tossed him, and pondered deeply
and long

How he might fall on the host of the shameless suitor-throng,
Alone against many : but nigh him Pallas Athenê drew ; 30
For she stooped from the halls of the sky, as a woman to outward
view ; [spoke :

And behold, she stood at his head in the dimness of night, and she
“ Why wakest thou thus on thy bed, O wretched above all folk ?
Lo, this is thine home ; lo, here is thy wife in thine halls with thee,
And thy son, such a son as a man would pray that his own might
be.”

And the man of the manifold counsels answered thereunto :
“ Yea Goddess, thy words are wisdom, and all thy sayings are true.
But mine heart is trouble-tossed, and pondereth deep and long
How to lay mine hands on the host of the shameless suitor-throng.
I am one, and alone ; but ever they meet in a crowd in mine hall. 40
Yea also mine heart is perplexed for this which is harder than all :
For if by the favour of Zeus and of thee I shall slay these men,
Devise for me, how shall I 'scape the revenge of their kinsfolk then ? ”

And again Athenê the grey-eyed spake to the hero her rede :
“ Beshrew thee ! a man would give ear to a worser friend in his
need,

Yea, to a mortal, and nothing so wise in manifold lore.
But I am a Goddess, she that guardeth thee evermore
In all thy troubles, and now an assurance to thee will I give :
If fifty troops of men by the breath of their nostrils that live
Were set in array about us, were furious to fight us and slay, 50
Yet shouldst thou take their kine and their goodly sheep for a prey.
But now let slumber enclasp thee : it shall not lighten thine heart
To keep vigil the livelong night : and soon shall thine ills depart.”

Then the dews of slumber she poured on his eyelids there as he
lay ;

And the Goddess divine hath soared to Olympus far away.
When the soft Limb-looser, untying the tangle of troublous thought,
Had seized him, wretchedly lying his wise wife slumbered not.
On her soft couch sat she, and still she wept in her lonely woe,
Till her spirit had drunken its fill of the wells whence tears over-
flow ; [Bow : 60

And she wailed out a prayer in her dark despair to the Maid of the
“ Artemis, daughter of Zeus, dread Goddess ! O that to-day
Thou wouldst plant in my bosom thine arrow and take my life
away

This instant !—O were I snatched by a hurricane's passionate breath,
And away were I swept and away on the mist-dim paths of death,

And were whelmed in the rush of Ocean's backward-sweeping
waters! [daughters—

And even as the arms of the storm-wind caught up Pandarus'
Their parents the Gods had destroyed, and they in the palace re-
mained

Orphans: but Aphroditê their helpless lives sustained
With curds and with pleasant honey and sweet flame-flashing wine;
And in loveliness and in wisdom did Herê make them outshine 70
All daughters of earth, and Artemis made them stately and tall;
And in lovely loom-work Athenê made them wise above all.

But when Aphroditê the Goddess to wide Olympus sped
To implore for her foster-daughters the bliss of the happy-wed
Of Zeus the thunder-lover, for all things are under his ken,
Both the bliss and the wretchedness of the death-doomed children
of men,— [away from the light,

Then the Storm-fiends swooped on the maidens and snatched them
To be handmaids unto the loathly Furies in halls of night. [skies,
So may the Deathless destroy me that dwell in the height of the
Or may fair-tressed Artemis smite me, that seeing my lord with
mine eyes 80

I might pass under earth to the narrow house, to the mansion ab-
horred,

And never abase me to gladden the heart of a meaner lord.
Ah, not too heavy to bear is the anguish when all day long
A man must weep heart-haunted aye by a trouble-throng,
If but slumber enfolds him at night—for all remembrance flies
Of good things and evil, when droopeth the sleep-veil over his eyes,—
But to me doth a God send ill dreams, even in the slumber-tide.
For methought this night that there lay one like unto him by my
side, [glad!

Even such as he was when he went to the war—O mine heart was
For I deemed that nowise a dream, but a vision it was that I had."

So spake she, and even with the word came the Dawning, the
Golden-throned:

And Odysseus the godlike heard her voice as she wept and moaned.
Sudden-waking in dazed surprise, to his startled soul he said
That his wife had pierced his disguise, and stood even then at his
head. [he bare

Then the things that had been for his bed, the cloak and the fleeces,
To a high-seat the hall within, and he laid them thereon, but the
skin

Without on the ground he spread: and he lifted his hands in prayer:
"Zeus, Father, if ye, the Gods, have consented o'er land and sea
To bring me home, though ye meted out evil aforetime to me, [100
From one of the folk that be waking within some word let me hear
Fair-boding: without may a token withal from Zeus appear."

So praying the hero spoke: Allfather hearkened his cry, [sky,
And a crash of thunder broke from the Gods' bright home in the

From the height of the halls of cloud ; so Odysseus rejoiced at the sound.

From within then spake aloud a woman of them that ground,
Where anigh him the handmills lay of the Shepherd of Ithaca's land,
Whereat drudged day by day twelve women, a toil-worn band,
Bruising the barley and wheat, the life and the marrow of men.
Now the sleep of the others was sweet, for their portion was ground
by then.

One only was toiling still, for her limbs were exceeding weak : 110
Yet a moment she stayeth her mill, and a sign for the king doth she
speak :

" Allfather of Gods and men, who sittest enthroned on high,
Full loud hath thy thunder rolled in the star-bestudded sky ; [sign.
Yet clouds are there none : herein art thou granting to some one a
Now also fulfil unto wretched me this saying of mine :
May this be the last and the uttermost day that the suitors come
For the revel and feast of delight in the halls of the isle-king's home,
Even they that have loosened my knees with toil heart-breaking
and sore

Grinding their meal : this once may they banquet, and never more."

Glad then was Odysseus' soul that word fair-boding to hear, 120
And for Zeus's thunder-roll ; for he deemed that his vengeance was
near.

Now the rest of the handmaid-thralls in Odysseus' beautiful halls,
Awaking out of their sleep, the fire on the hearth 'gan light.
And now doth Telemachus leap from his couch, a godlike wight,
And he clad him, and flung around his shoulders his falchion keen ;
And his beautiful sandals he bound fast under his feet's white sheen ;
And a mighty spear with the brass keen-tipped in his hand did he
take.

[and spake :
But he stayed him at point to pass o'er the threshold, and turned him
" Dear nurse, did ye give yestreen to the stranger the stranger's right ?
Had he food and a couch, or untended lay through a comfortless
night ?

130
For thus is my mother's wont—she is wise : yet in wisdom's despite
Blindly with honour she welcometh many a worser wight,
And she sendeth the better man empty-handed and shamed away."

Then did the wise Eurycleia answer the prince and say :
" Now nay, my son, never blame her, for guiltless she is of blame.
So long as he would, did he sit and drink of the vineyard-flame ;
And he said that he hungered for bread no more ; for she asked it of
him.

But when he bethought him of rest, when the earth-ways all grew dim,
Our lady gave command to her maidens to spread him a bed.

But he, as a man ill-fated and utterly woe-bested, 140
Was nowise minded on couches and soft-heaped rugs to sleep ;
But even on the hide undressed of an ox, and on fleeces of sheep
In the forecourt-hall he lay, and above him a mantle we cast."

Then Telemachus turned him away, and forth of the hall hath he passed,
 Bearing his lance, and his fleet hounds followed their master's tread ;
 And, the sons of Achaia to meet, he hied to the folk-mote-stead.

Then cried to her handmaid-train Eurycleia the woman divine,
 Who was born far over the main unto Ops and Peisēnor's line :
 " Bestir you," she cried, " let some of you sweep the palace-hall,
 And sprinkle, and spread, to cover the fair-wrought thrones withal,
 Tapestries purple-dyed, and washed be the tables o'er [150
 With sponges ; and cleansed be the bowls wherefrom the wine they
 pour,

And the double-chalice goblets ; and some of you hie to the spring
 For the water, and loiter ye not your pitchers hither to bring. [stay ;
 For it shall not be long that the suitor-throng from our hall will
 Right early will they return, for this is their festival-day."

Thus to the handmaids she cried, and they hearkened with heed
 and obeyed. [shade :
 So a score to the fountain hied where the streams flashed cool in the
 And the rest their labour plied, and the hall of the feasting arrayed.

By this to the forecourt-garth came the suitors' serving-men, 160
 And deftly and well for the hearth cleft wood ; and the handmaids
 again [pressed ;
 From the fountain came with the water : the swineherd behind them
 And he brought three boars for slaughter, of all his herd the best.
 But he let the beasts roam wide through the fair garths seeking
 their food ;

But himself by Odysseus' side with kindly greeting stood :
 " Stranger, say, do the suitors regard thee any more,
 Or still in the halls do they do thee dishonour, even as before ? "

And Odysseus the manifold-counselled spake unto him in his turn :
 " Eumæus, O that the Gods would give them requital stern
 For the flouts, for the tyrannous outrage, the caitiff devices they
 frame 170

In the house of another man, and have no whit of shame ! "
 As each unto other thus they spake in their grief and their wrath,
 The goatherd Melanthius drew nigh on the selfsame path ; [find,
 She-goats was he driving, the best that in all the flocks he might
 To be slain for the suitors' feast ; and his two men followed behind.
 So he brought them in, and fast to a porch-hall pillar he tied :
 But himself on Odysseus cast the word of reviling and cried :
 " Thou here ! shall thy kill-joy face be about the house evermore
 With thy begging of this man and that ? wilt thou never go forth
 of the door ? [wis, 180

But as touching these dealings of thine, we shall not be at one, I
 Ere I make thee to taste of mine hand : thy begging is all amiss ;
 It is shameless robbery :—what ! are there feast-halls none but
 this ? "

So in his spite he said : nought answered Odysseus to him,

But he silently shook his head, dark-brooding a purpose grim.

And there as they stood came a third, Philœtius valiant and true,
With fatling goats from the herd and a cow for the suitor crew—
Over the sea-channel these by the ferryman wights were brought,
By the shipmen that over the seas bare all that their helping sought.
So the beasts with heed he tied 'neath the porch-hall's echoing
height ; [wight : 190

But himself to the swineherd's side drew near, and he asked of the
" Prithee, who is the stranger forlorn that is come but now to our
halls,

Friend swineherd, and who be the folk that his countrymen he calls ?
Yea, where is his birth-spot found, and the soil of his fatherland
where ? [there !

Ah hapless!—and stately his frame is, as though 'twere a king stood
No marvel the Gods afflict poor wanderers to and fro,
When even for kings they weave the tangled web of woe."

He spake, and the welcoming right hand gave, drawing near to
his side, [cried :
And forth of his lips flew the light-winged words, and kindly he
" Hail, father stranger ! may bliss be thy portion in days to be,
Albeit manifold evils this day are encompassing thee. 200

Allfather, none is so cruel as thou of the Deathless Ones,
Who pitiest not the men whom thyself hast begotten thy sons ;
But thou makest them dwell with affliction, and fillest with bitterest
woe.

A cold sweat stands on my limbs as I look, and mine eyes overflow
As I call Odysseus to mind, for I think that my king even now
Is a homeless wanderer, clad in even such rags as thou,
If anywhere yet he is living, and seeth the sun's dear light :
But and if he is dead by this, and in Hades' halls of night,
Then alas for the noble Odysseus, who set me in charge of his kine
When I was but a lad, in the isle Cephallenia, over the brine !
Now is the tale of them countless : never hath neatherd seen
Such increase of broad-browed beeves, as of ears of corn, I ween.
Yet these am I bidden to bring, the stranger-gluttons to feed,
The while of his son in the ancient halls they take no heed, [ing
Neither quake for the vengeance of God, for now are they hunger-
To divide and devour the wealth of the long-departed king ;
While the wild dark thoughts through my heart, as the winter whirl-
winds, drive,

And it seemeth a caitiff deed, while yet his son is alive,
To get me out of the land, yea, to steal his beeves away
To a people of strangers—yet is it bitterer here to stay 220
With herds not mine, neither his, in anguish day by day.
Ah, long ago to another proud-souled king had I gone
Fleeing the place where deeds no more to be borne are done ;
But mine heart is foreboding yet that the hapless hero may come
And scatter the suitor-rout in the halls of his ancient home."

Unto him made answer Odysseus in manifold wisdom wise :
 " Herdman, nor witless nor wicked thou seemest to be in mine eyes.
 Yea, this do I know of thine heart, that prudence abideth there.

Wherefore I say, and a mighty oath withal will I swear :

Let Zeus, most highest of Gods, know now, and the guest-fain
 board, 230

And the hearth, whereunto I am come, of Odysseus, thy princely
 lord,

While yet thou art here, to his home shall Odysseus the lost return ;
 And thine eyes, if thou wilt, shall behold him, and all for the which
 they yearn,

When he slayeth the suitors that lord it here in their insolent pride."

Then spake unto him the neatherd, the warder of beeves replied :

" Ah that Kronion, stranger, would grant that this might be !

Thou shouldst know that the strength of mine hands hath not for-
 saken me."

Then also Eumæus prayed to the Gods in the selfsame strain,
 That Odysseus the long-delayed might return to his home again.

As each unto other thus the unknown and the faithful said, 240
 For the feet of Telemachus were the suitors plotting to spread
 The death-snare ;—swift through the sky on their left sped an omen
 above :

'Twas an eagle soaring on high, and he clutched in his talons a dove.
 Straightway did Amphinomus cry to the rest as he boded thereof :
 " Friends, not as to-day may our counsel of slaying Telemachus speed ;
 For the fates are against us ; but now to the feast let us all give
 heed."

So gave he his rede, and all the others were well content.

And into the palace-hall of divine Odysseus they went. [and seat :
 And they doffed their mantles, and threw them down upon couch
 And goodly sheep they slew and fatling goats for their meat, 250
 And slaughtered the boars huge-fed, and a pasture-fattened cow ;
 And they roasted the meats, and they spread on the board ; and the
 red wine now [then.

They mix in the bowls, and the warder of swine dealt cups to them
 And serveth the bread in order Philætiús, captain of men,
 In beautiful-fashioned maunds ; and the wine did Melanthius pour.
 So the feasters put forth their hands to the banquet's plenteous
 store. [to be done—

And his sire did the prince seat there—giving heed what were best
 In the feast-hall stately and fair, and hard by the threshold-stone ;
 And he set him a low mean seat, and a table, a scantling board ;
 And he gave him a share of the meat, and the flame-flushed wine
 he poured 260

Bright-mantling up in the golden cup, as he spake the word :

" There sit thou now, and drink of the wine with the feasting throng,
 And myself will guard thee from violent hand and from railing
 tongue

Of every suitor : this house is not unto all folk free,
 For Odysseus gat these halls in possession, and gat them for me.
 And you, ye suitors,—bridle your spirit from threatening,
 And from violent hands, lest out of it strife and contention spring.”

So the brave young voice rang clear, and biting their lips they
 heard,

Half wondering, half in fear, that stout and defiant word. [270

Till Antinous, son of Eupeithes, spake to the rest with a taunt :

“ Achæans, awhile let us bear with Telemachus’ arrogant vaunt,

Albeit he spareth us not, and is doughty in threats, I wis ;

For as yet Zeus letteth our purposes, else in his halls ere this

Had we silenced his voice, albeit a loud-tongued braggart he is.”

But Telemachus heard him unheeding, nor quailed at his evil
 frown. [the town :

And by this came the heralds, leading the hecatomb up through

And the long-haired folk with these the hallowed high-place trod,

In the cool dim shade of the trees of Apollo the Archer-God.

So now is the banquet arrayed, and the roast drawn back from the
 flame ; [280

And to each is divided his share, and they feast right nobly there :

But that which the henchmen laid by Odysseus was ever the same

As they dealt unto each of the rest of the feasters : for so was it done

By Telemachus’ strict behest, the godlike hero’s son.

But Athenê let not the rout of the arrogant suitors refrain

From heart-stinging taunt and flout, to the end that the goad of pain

In the heart of Odysseus, the king of the isle-folk, should rangle
 and sting. [bold ;

Now from Samê’s island there came one lawless and shameless-

And Ctesippus he had to name, that suitor evil-souled ;

Putting trust in the multitude of his riches—the little-hearted !—

The royal wife he wooed of Odysseus the long-departed.

Even he to the overweening suitors aloud ’gan cry :

“ Harken, ye manful suitors, a word for your ears have I :

Nothing will serve but all this while yon stranger-wight

Must share as the rest :—’twere unseemly and wrongful to do despite

To Telemachus’ guests, what losel soever may come to his door !

Lo now, let me give him a guest-gift, that out of his treasure-store

He may give largesse to the bath-maid, or whomso he will of the
 thralls

That must wait on his lordly pleasure in godlike Odysseus’ halls.”

Then from his brawny hand the hoof of a bullock he sped,

Snatching it out of a maund : just moved Odysseus his head, 300

That it lighted not upon him : but a bitter smile and a grim [side

Did he smile in his heart, as the stroke on the fair-built wall by his

Crashed,—forth Telemachus broke, and fierce to Ctesippus he cried :

“ Ctesippus, well is it for thee that thy malice was baffled so,

That thou struckest the stranger not, that himself avoided the blow ;

Else had I verily smitten thee through with a swift sharp spear ;

And thy sire for a bridal-bed had been dighting thy grave-mound here.

Wherefore let none in mine halls affront me with shameful deed ;
 For now have I understanding to know, and eyes to heed
 The evil and good ; but a witless child heretofore have I been. 310
 Hitherto have we patiently borne with the things that our eyes have
 seen, [bread ;

The reckless slaughter of sheep, and the wasting of wine and of
 For if one would withstand a host, I trow he were hard-bestead.
 Come now, make an end of your wrongs, ye who deal with your
 host as a foe !

But and if ye be steadfastly minded now to lay me low,
 Even of that were I fain, and better by far were it so,
 That I died, than to look evermore upon deeds of shame and wrong,
 On the buffeting of the stranger, the handmaids haled along
 By shameful hands through the fair halls loud with a rioting throng."

Hushed were they all as they heard that stern wrath-shivering
 tone : 320

But at last one took up the word, Agelaus Damastor's son :

" Friends, no man sure would be wroth for a just word spoken
 aright,

To requite it with railing speech, and with thoughts of mischief and
 spite. [thralls

Meddle not with the stranger, nor buffet, nor any beside of the
 That pass to and fro in your sight in the hero Odysseus' halls.

Yet a word of kindly counsel fain were I now to give

Unto mother and son, an it please their souls such rede to receive :
 So long as the heart in your bosoms in faith and in hope might
 yearn

That Odysseus the passing-wise might yet to his own return,
 So long could none think shame that still ye should wait and
 restrain 330

The suitors your halls within : yea, this were the more for your gain
 In the day of Odysseus' return, when again he should stand in his
 hall. [befall.

But by this is it plain that the thing that ye longed for shall never
 Prithce now, sit thou by thy mother and counsel her thus, that she
 wed

Whosoever in presents o'erpasseth the rest and in princelihead.
 So with joy shalt thou eat and drink, and be lord over everything
 That was his ; while she is the light of the home of another king."

Then unto him wise-witted Telemachus answered again :

" No, Agelaus, by Zeus !—by my father's sorrow and pain, [340

Who from Ithaca far hath perished, or roams on an alien shore !—
 I let not my mother from marriage : I bid her evermore

That she wed with the man that she will, and whose gifts are an
 untold store.

But ashamed were I to drive my mother perforce from mine hall

With a masterful word: may God forbid such a thing should befall!"

Then from the suitor-throng, by Pallas Athenê raised,
Pealed laughter loud and long, and their wildered thoughts were
dazed; [sound,

And their laughter grew frenzied and wild, with a weird unnatural
And the meats were blood-defiled that they gorged, and their eyes
were drowned [wails near.

With tears, and their souls were adread with a horror of death-
And aghast Theoclymenus said to the rest, the godlike seer: 350

"Ah wretches! what doom is upon you?—with night are your heads
overclouded, [enshrouded:

And your faces and knees beneath are with blackness of darkness
There is wildfire of shrieking and moaning, and tears on your cheeks
as a flood; [blood:

And the walls and the mid-pillar-spaces fair are bedabbled with
With phantoms the porchway is thronged, and the court from wall
to wall, [as a pall,

Rushing forth to the netherworld gloom, and the sky blackens down
For the sun is dead, and a mist and a death-damp swept over all."

But all they laughed upon him the louder with ghastly glee;
And Eurymachus Polybus' son to the rest spake scornfully: [360
"Stark mad is our stranger! Witless he came from the alien shore.
We will none of him: hasten, youths, and thrust him forth of the
door:

Let him go the market-rabble, who likens our mirth unto night."

Answered and spake unto him Theoclymenus, godlike wight:
"Eurymachus, send no guides to direct my goings aright.
I have eyes, I have ears; and moreover I lack not feet for my need,
And a mind, but a mind not framed for shameful purpose and deed.
With these will I forth of the hall, for I mark how your bane draw-
eth nigh,

The doom that none shall be able to shun, neither any to fly
Of all the suitors in godlike Odysseus' palace that throng,
Wantonly outraging men, and devising reckless wrong." 370

Then forth from their voices he strode, and he left that stately pile,
And he came to Peiræus' abode, to the glad guest-welcoming smile.

But the lawless suitor-rout looking each in his fellow's face
Laughed loud at the strangers, to flout the prince with the board's
disgrace: [place:

And an insolent voice rang out through the taunt-storm filling the
"Telemachus, no man on earth hath sorrier guests than thou!

What a gluttonous vagabond wretch is this thou hast gotten but now,
Ever craving for meat and for drink, and utterly skillless of toil,
Strengthless for battle, and nought but a load on the cumbered soil!
And here again was another that rose with his prophet-lore! 380
But and if thou wouldst hearken to me, sure this would advantage
thee more:

Fling we the strangers a-shipboard, and send them over the waves
Unto Sicily; there would they pay thee a right good price for thy
slaves." [jeers;

So they cried in his tingling ears, but he bare him as deaf to their
But ever he cast his eyes on his father, and deemed it o'erlong
Till the sign should be given to arise and to deal with the shameless
in wrong.

And aye as they rioted thus, sat Penelopê facing them there,
Wise child of Icarius, a queen in a queenly chair. [heard she;
And the strife of the tongues of the men in the hall as they mocked
For they turned to their feasting then, and they laughed ever louder
in glee. [390

For many a fatling beast had been slain for their stintless cheer:—
Yet never a ghastlier feast might there be than the feast drawing near,
Which the Goddess and hero made speed in the halls they had shamed
to array; [day.
For themselves had scattered the seed, making mock at the harvesting

BOOK XXI.

Of the ordeal of the bow.

NOW She of the Flashing Eyes so wrought that the queen be-
thought her—

Penelopê passing-wise, Icarius' stately daughter—
To set, for the suitors to try, the bow and the steel hoar-grey
In Odysseus' halls, for a prize and withal a beginning of slaughter.
And up the staircase high of her palace she went her way.
In her soft white hand she took the graceful-bended key,
The beautiful brazen hook, with its handle of ivory.
So she hied with her handmaid-train to the innermost chamber door,
To the room where long had lain the lost king's treasure-store,
The flame-flash of brass, and the glow of gold, and iron huge-
wrought. 10

And therein was the twi-curved bow, and the quiver arrow-fraught,
Full-fraught with the bearers of doom that were winged with gasp-
ing and moan ;

The gifts of a stranger whom in Sparta Odysseus had known,
Even Iphitus, Eurytus' son, a hero grand as a god :
For they met in the days long gone, when the shore of Messenê they
trod ;

In Orsilochus' palace they met ; for thither Odysseus came
Fearlessly claiming his debt of the nation that owed him the same.
For Messenians over the deep had come down upon Ithaca's shore,
And thence three hundred sheep with the shepherds their galleys
bore,

So Odysseus a long way went on an ambassage, lad though he was ;
For his sire and the elders sent him to claim them, pleading their
cause.

But Iphitus came in quest of horses that lacked from his stall :
Twelve mares had he lost, and the best of his toil-strong mules
therewithal.

Yet an evil lure for him unto murder and doom were these,
In the hour when he came unto grim strong-hearted Hêracles,

The hero whom Zeus begat ; yet a deed of horror he wrought,
 For he slew him, a guest as he sat in his house mistrustful of nought :
 Of the God's wrath nothing he recked—sin-hardened !—the guest-
 hallowed board

He held not in any respect, but with murder reddened his sword.
 So the strong-hoofed steeds of the guest in the stalls of the robber
 abode. 30

With Odysseus he met on the quest after these, and the bow he
 bestowed ;

And this was the selfsame one that Eurytus bare in his might,
 And bequeathed in his halls to his son, when he passed to the Land
 of Night.

And a keen-edged battle-brand was Odysseus' gift, and a spear,
 At the first troth-clasp of the hand : yet never mid feastful cheer
 Unto dearer knowledge they won, seeing Héracles slew ere then
 Iphitus Eurytus' son, who was like to a god among men,
 Who gave to Odysseus the bow. Yet the king took it not in the day
 When he hied him to meet the foe in his black ships far away :
 But it lay in his halls, and there kept green the memory 40
 Of the dear dead friend : but he bare it at home by forest and lea.

So now is that lady bright to the chamber door drawn nigh,
 And the threshold of oak which the wright in the happy days gone by
 Cunningly polished, and laid the levelling line along ;
 And he set up the posts, and he made the shining doors and strong.
 And she hasted and loosened the string that was tied to the handle-
 ring : [bolts of the door

And therethrough hath she thrust the key, and hath struck back the
 With a straight thrust skilfully : came a crash, and, loud as the roar
 Of a meadow-pasturing bull, the thundering echoes rang
 As the key struck fair and full, and wide the door-leaves sprang. 50
 Then she stept on the high-built floor where stood in goodly array
 The chests in the which fair store of scented raiment lay.
 Then took she the bow on the wall as it hung of the treasure-room,
 And the bright case therewithal that was sheathing the speeder of
 doom. [place

And she sat with the bow-sheath lying across her knees, and the
 Thrilled with the voice of her crying ; then drew she the bow from
 the case.

But her heart grew lighter at last for her weeping long and loud :
 And adown to the hall she passed to the haughty suitor-crowd,
 Bearing the twi-curved bow and the quiver arrow-fraught—
 Ay, many a bearer of woe was therein, for the vengeance wrought. 60
 And behind her the handmaids bare a chest, steel axes enow
 And axes of brass lay there which the king won long ago.

So she came to the feasting-place of the suitors, that lady divine,
 And she stood by a column tall of the richly-carven hall,
 Holding before her face her headveil dainty and fine ;
 And a trusty handmaid stood by the queen upon either side.

And straightway in mournfullest mood in the midst of the suitors
she cried :

“ Hearken to me, ye arrogant suitors, who day by day
Afflict mine house with devouring and drinking its wealth alway,
While my lord hath been long time gone : and through all this weary
tide 70

Could your false hearts find for your lips no word-pretence beside,
Save this, that each of you sorely desired to win me his bride.
Come, suitors—for this is the contest appointed your wooing to end—
I will set you the mighty bow of Odysseus the hero divine :
Whosoe’er of you all with his hands shall the bow most easily bend,
And shoot through the rings of the axes twelve ranged all in line,
Him will I follow, forsaking this beautiful home of mine,—
Dear home, that knew me a bride, with its wealth of abundant store !
I shall never forget it ; in dreams I shall see it for evermore.”

Then the lady turned her, and spake unto godlike Eumæus her
hest, 80

The bow to the suitors to take and the hoary steel for the test.
Sore weepeth the warder of swine as he taketh and layeth it down ;
Sore weepeth the herdman of kine, as he seeth that bow of renown.

But Antinous snarled at their tears, and in angry wise did he say :
“ Oafs, acre-abiding loons, whose thoughts are of nought but to-day !
Spiritless wretches, why weep ye to stir up the heart of the queen
By your tears to a passion of sorrow ?—without your provoking, I
ween,

Lieth her spirit in anguish for him she shall see never more.
Sit ye in silence, and feast, or get you forth of the door,
And weep as ye list without, and leave unto us the bow. 90
Unto all the suitors an ordeal dread shall it be, for I trow
This well-polished bow shall be nowise easily bended and strung ;
For never a man shall be found the host of the suitors among
Like to Odysseus : myself beheld him in days gone by :
I remember his goodlihead still—yet a young child then was I.”

So he cried, but a hope in his breast ever whispered him better
things, [through the rings.

That with might overpassing the rest he should string it, and shoot
Ah, but the first of their band must he taste the arrow that came
From the hero Odysseus’ hand unto whom he had wrought foul shame
As he sat in his halls, and stirred up his fellows to do him despite. 100

Then rose and took up the word Telemachus’ sacred might :
“ Ha ! what is this that Kronion hath done to me ?—madness is this !
This dear-loved mother of mine, albeit so wise she is, [part :—
Hath pledged her a bride : ere long from the ancient halls shall she
And behold, on my lips is there laughter, and joy in my foolish heart !
But come now, ye suitors, behold what a prize for your prowess is
here !

In all the Achæan land no woman is found her peer ;
Not in Pylos the sacred, in Argos, Mycenæ the rampart-crowned,

Nor in Ithaca's isle nor the dark-loamed mainland-shore is there found;—

What do I to praise my mother?—yourselves have beheld her, and [know. 110
Seek ye not therefore excuse for delay, neither shrink from the bow,
That the stringing thereof should tarry long, to the end we may see.
Yea I, even I, will essay if the deed may be done by me : [lane,
If my hands shall prevail to strain it and shoot through the iron
Then shall I not be left to inherit nothing but pain

In the halls of my mother forsaken, since I in my father's might
On the spoils of his prowess will lay mine hand by a hero's right."

Forth in their midst doth he stand, and his crimson cloak hath
he flung [unslung.
From his shoulders : his battle-brand keen-edged hath he swiftly
Then the row of the axes he placed, for he dug him a long trench
there; 120

For the twelve but one furrow he traced, and straight he drew it
and fair : [the men

And he stamped the earth down flat : so deftly he wrought, that
Stared all in amazement thereat, for he never had seen it ere then.

To the threshold now doth he go, and he maketh assay of the bow.

Thrice did he tug and strain, while quivered the bow of his sire :

Thrice must his sinews refrain, albeit his soul was afire

To bend it, to string it, and speed the shaft through the iron lane :

The fourth, he had done it indeed, sore striving with might and
main ;

But Odysseus shook his head, and he stayed in his heart's despite.

Then spake to the suitors and said Telemachus' sacred might : 130

" Ha ! not in the days to come shall mine heart and mine arm be
strong :

Or as yet am I over young, and I needs must tarry long [wrong.

Ere mine hands shall maintain my cause against him that doeth me

Come, ye of the mightier thews, of the sinews battle-tried,

Make proof of the bow, let the contest be ended, and won be the
bride." [the wall,

Then he put from his hands the bow, and he leaned it against

Where the panels gleamed arow by the door of the feasting-hall ;

And the swift shaft therebeside 'gainst the fair bow-tip did he rest ;

And back to his throne hath he hied whence he rose for the archer-
test ; [140

And Antinous straightway cried to the suitors his masterful hest :

" From the left to the right in order, companions all, rise up,

Beginning where first the cupbearer poureth the wine in the cup."

So spake he, and so it was done, for his counsel was good in their
eyes.

And then did Leiôdes the son of Oenops first arise. [bowl

Now the man was the suitors' priest, and he sat ever next to the

In the innermost place at their feast ; but their deeds were abhorred
of his soul :

For his spirit at all the train was with indignation aglow.
 Lo first in his hands hath he ta'en the swift-winged shaft and the
 bow. [strain :
 On the great stone threshold he stands : he essayeth that bow to
 But the horn bends not : and his hands grow weary with tugging in
 vain, 150
 For that tender and soft were they ; and he turned to the suitors
 and said :

“String it I cannot, my friends ; let another essay in my stead :
 For from many a hero, from many a prince shall life and breath
 Be reft by this same bow, since better by far were death
 Than life, if it means but despair of the prize for the which ever-
 more [door.
 In the longing of hope deferred we have thronged to the palace-
 Now each of you hopes in his soul—ay, longs with a passionate
 yearning

To wed with Penelopê, wife of Odysseus the unreturning.
 But so soon as his hands shall have tried, or his eyes shall have
 seen this bow,

Ah then to another lovely-robed Greek girl let him go, 160
 To woo her in courtly wise with his gifts : and the queen shall wed
 With the man who lavisheth most, and who cometh destiny-led.”

Then he put from his hands the bow, and he leaned it against the
 wall,

Where the panels gleamed arow by the door of the feasting-hall ;
 And the swift shaft therebeside 'gainst the fair bow-tip did he rest ;
 And back to his throne hath he hied, whence he rose for the archer-
 test.

But Antinous cried out upon him, and angrily chiding said :
 “What word, Leiôdes, is this through the fence of thy teeth that
 hath fled ?

A shameful word and a grievous ? I hear with indignant scorn !
 Must it needs be that princes be left of spirit and breath forlorn, 170
 For that thou in thy impotent strength canst nowise bend it and
 string ?

Tush ! never, I trow, thy mother bare thee, thou puny thing,
 For a bender of bows among men, and a speeder of arrows keen ;
 Yet lordly suitors be here that full lightly shall string it, I ween.”

So speaks he ; and now on Melanthius, herdman of goats, doth
 he call :

“Bestir thee, Melanthius, bestir thee, and kindle a fire in the hail ;
 And a great chair set thereby, and thereover lay thou a fleece,
 And bring from the household store a broad thick cake of grease :
 And there shall the young men warm it, and rub with the streaming
 oil, [180

To the end we may try this bow and accomplish the ordeal-toil.”
 Swift did Melanthius light the flame's unwearying might ;
 And thither a chair he bore, and thereover he spread a fleece,

And he brought from the household store a broad thick cake of grease. [toiled

So they warmed it, and each 'gan strain at the bow; but ever they With desperate tugging in vain, and their best were utterly foiled, Till Antinous bided the test with Eurymachus, godlike wight, They only, who passed the rest of the suitors in manful might.

Then forth of the feast-hall hied two true men side by side, The henchmen that guarded the swine and the beeves of Odysseus' stall; [190

And Odysseus the hero divine went forth to them out of the hall. But when they were gotten without the doors and the compassing court,

The hero turned him about, and he spake in kindly sort :

"Herdman—swineherd—hearken : a tale shall my lips begin,— Shall I hide it?—'Nay, speak out!' mine heart is crying within. What manner of men would ye be by Odysseus in battle to stand, If he suddenly came to his own, by a God brought back to his land? Would ye fight in that day for the suitors, or stand by Odysseus your lord?

Answer me, even as your heart and your spirit prompteth the word." Made answer and spake unto him the henchman, the warder of kine :

"Ah Zeus Allfather, that thou wouldst fulfil this wish of mine, 200 That Odysseus might come to his own, by a God's hand hitherward led ! [dead."

Then shouldst thou know that the strength of mine hands is not yet

Then also Eumæus prayed to the Gods in the selfsame strain, That Odysseus the long-delayed might return to his home again.

And as soon as Odysseus knew that their hearts were flawless in faith, [saith :

He spake to the faithful and true, and in tones deep-thrilling he

"Lo I, even I, am he : out of manifold troubles and sore

In the twentieth year am I come to the home on my fatherland-shore.

And I know that of all my thralls there is none save you alone

That have longed to behold my return : of the rest have I heard not one 210

Who prayed that my feet might stand again in the ancient hall.

But to you true promise I give, and the thing shall surely befall :

If God subdueth beneath me the lawless children of pride,

Fair wives will I give unto both of you ; wealth shall be yours beside,

And houses builded beside mine own ; and in days to be

For my son's companions and brothers shall ye be accounted of me.

Lo now I will show you a sign and a token that cannot deceive,

To the end ye may know me well, and your inmost hearts may believe : [once,

Lo the scar that the white-flashing tusk of the wild boar dealt me

What time to the dells of Parnassus I went with Autolycus' sons."

From the great scar then he drew the tatters thereover that fell ;

And they looked thereupon, and they knew, for they minded the token well.

And they wept, as their arms they flung around the lost restored,
And aye as they lovingly clung kissed the shoulders and head of their lord ;

And kisses the hero rained on them, kisses on shoulders and head.
So wept they, the light of the sun had gone down ere their mourning was done ;

But Odysseus himself restrained their passionate crying, and said :
“ Cease from your tears and your moans, lest it chance that some-one behold,

Coming forth of the hall, and the tale unto them within be told.

But now, not all together, but one after one, pass in ; 230

And myself will be first, and let this be the sign for our deeds to begin :

For the lordly suitors, uplifting their voices threateningly,

Will essay to let thee from bearing the bow and the quiver to me.

But thou, Eumæus the godlike, bear onward the bow through the hall, [withal

And deliver it into mine hands : thou shalt speak to the women
That they shut the doors of their chamber massy and bolt-gripped close :

And if from within they shall hear any groaning or clashing of blows
In the place of the chambers of men, they shall not stir forth of the door ;

But there shall they tarry in quiet, and heed their toil as before.

And, hero Philœtius, I give thee command that thou lock with the key 240

The forecourt-gates, and with ropes shalt thou lash them speedily.”

So spake he, and entered the fair-set, stately-built pile, [while.

And again sat down on the chair from the which he had risen ere-
And the thralls in a little space came back each man to his place.

And now was Eurymachus turning to this side and that side the bow, [so

As in front of the hearth bright-burning he warmed it : yet not even
Might he string it, but struggled in vain, till his proud heart heavily sighed,

And a groan of indignant pain burst forth of his lips, and he cried :

“ Gods ! anguish of spirit have I for myself and for all the rest !

Not for the bride that I lose is the bitterest pang in my breast : 250

There is many a Greek girl lovely and sweet to be won for a bride

In Ithaca sea-encompassed and many a city beside :

But to think that our bodily prowess falleth so far below

The godlike Odysseus’ might, that we cannot string his bow !—

O the shame, O the scorning for them that are yet to be born to know ! ”

But Antinous son of Eupëithes shouted across the hall :—

“ Eurymachus, no !—thou knowest thyself—this shall not befall.

For to-day to the Archer-god is a sacred feast in the town ;
 And how should the bow be bent ?—nay, quietly lay it down.
 And as touching the axes, what if we leave them all to stay 260
 Standing arow ? for I ween no man will take them away,
 Entering into the hall of Laertes' son this day.
 But come, let the cupbearer pour in the goblets orderly,
 To the end we may spill the libation, and put the curved bow by.
 And to-morn shall Melanthius, herdman of goats, bring down at our
 hest

She-goats from the mountain pastures, even his goodliest.
 And so to Apollo the bow-renowned will we burn their thighs,
 And thereafter will deal with the bow ; and the best shall win the
 prize."

So the son of Eupeithes said, and his counsel pleased the rest.
 And water the henchmen shed on the hands of every guest ; 270
 And they mingled the wine, and they poured till the great bowl
 mantled up ;

The libation from board to board they bare, then crowned each cup.
 But when they had spilled the wine, and had drunk, and were
 satisfied,

Then the wise-heart hero divine with guileful purpose cried :
 " Hear me, ye suitors that woo the fair queen world-renowned :
 Let me utter the word that my heart in my breast for my lips hath
 found.

Eurymachus most I entreat, with Antinous, godlike wight,—
 Seeing that this last word he hath uttered is meet and right,—
 That ye let be the bow for to-day, and commit to the Gods the rest ;
 So to-morn shall the God give mastery-might as seemeth him best.
 But give me, I pray you, the bow, that I may essay in your sight
 The strength of mine hands, whether yet in my sinews abideth the
 might

That my lithe limbs nowise lacked in the warrior days of old,
 Or if this have been wasted by want and by wanderings manifold."

Ha, but their souls were aglow with the wrath of their haughty
 scorn, [forlorn.

Yea, even with fear lest the bow should be strung by that beggar
 And Antinous chode with him there, and fiercely shouted he :

" Ha ! scurvy knave, no shadow of wit is found in thee !
 Doth this not content thee, to sit midst the pride of the princes here
 Feasting in peace ?—to be stinted in nought of the banquet-cheer, 290
 And to hearken our speech and our counsel ?—no stranger-beggar
 beside

May list to our high discourse at the princes' feastful tide.
 'Tis the wine that hath done thee a mischief, which tangleth and
 trippeth the wit

Of many a sot whose drouth heedeth nought that is seemly and fit.
 'Twas the wine-cup that maddened the Centaur Eurytion famous
 of old,

When the revel was high in the halls of Peirithous mighty-souled ;
 For he came to the Lapithan feast, and there was he wine-distraught,
 So that outrage in king Peirithous' halls in his frenzy he wrought.
 Sprang up the heroes in anguish of passion, and forth of the door
 Through the forecourt they dragged him ; his ears and his nose from
 his face they shore 300

With the pitiless brass ; and he, with a fire in his frenzied brain,
 Went raving under his burden of folly and madness-pain.
 Therefrom between centaurs and men was there stirred up a murder-
 ous fray.

Yet, wine-besotted, himself on himself brought bane that day.
 Even so unto thee do I promise requital of bitter pain, [bane,
 If thou stringest the bow ; and none shall deliver thee out of thy
 No man in our land : forthright will we send thee over the sea
 Unto Echetus, unto the king that destroyeth ruthlessly :
 Out of his hands shalt thou never deliver thee. Fool !—sit still :
 Drink on, neither strive with the noble and young in warrior-skill."

But Penelopê passing-wise spake out to the churl forthright : [310
 " Antinous, shameful and wrongful it were to do despite
 To Telemachus' guests, whosoever it be that shall sit at his board.
 What, do ye fear, if the stranger should string the great bow of my
 lord,

Putting his trust in the might of his hands and his thews well-tried,
 That the wight would lead me away to his home, and make me his
 bride ?

Himself in his inmost heart never dreamed such a dream at all.
 Let no man for this cause reckon the banquet as wormwood and gall,
 In his soul's grief : never, O never may such dishonour befall ! "

Spake Eurymachus, Polybus' son, slow-lifting his shame-heavy
 " O child of Icarius' line, Penelopê passing-wise, [eyes : 320
 We deem not that this man might win thee ; for never such thing
 could be.

Nay, for the tongues of men and of women ashamed are we,
 Lest base folk take up a scoff and a byword against us then,
 Telling how that a hero's wife was wooed by worsen men
 Whose puny strength prevailed not so much as to string his bow ;
 But there came by another, a beggar-wight wandering to and fro,
 And he easily strung it, and clean through the iron lane shot he :
 So shall our shame go abroad, and a mock in their mouths shall
 we be."

Flashed out her answer to him Penelopê passing-wise : 330
 " Talk ye of honour and fame, and of worship in menfolk's eyes,
 Ye that with darkest dishonour devour a hero's store !—
 O steeped to the lips in reproach, should this thing shame you more ?
 But as touching this stranger, stalwart he is, well-knit withal ;
 And he tells of the sire that begat him, a king in a royal hall.
 Nay, give to his hands the well-polished bow, to the end we may see.
 For thus do I promise, and surely accomplished my word shall be :

If he string it, if Phœbus vouchsafe him renown in the archer-test,
 I will give to him beautiful raiment, a mantle and tunic-vest,
 And a javelin to guard him, if dogs or evil men would molest ; 340
 And a two-edged sword will I give him, and sandal-shoon for his feet,
 And will send him whither his heart will, even as seemeth him
 meet."

Then to the queen wise-witted Telemachus made reply :

"Mother mine, none other hath power and authority more than I
 To give this bow unto whomsoever I will, or deny.

No man out of all the princes in Ithaca craggy-crowned,
 Nor of all that in isles of the sea unto horse-fed Elis be found,
 Shall overbear my pleasure as touching this bow, I say ;
 Though it pleased me to give it outright to the stranger to bear
 away. [350

But thou, enter into the house, to the labours of woman give heed,
 To the toils of the spindle and loom ; and command thy maidens to
 speed

Their tasks ; and leave unto men the bow, and chiefly to me ;
 For mine is the lordship in this mine house, and the mastery."

And the lady with wonder stirred did back to the house depart ;
 And she pondered her son's wise word, and she laid it up in her
 heart. [again ;

So she passed with her handmaidens twain to the upper chamber
 And there for the dear days dead and the love of Odysseus she wept,
 Till Athenê the sleep-dews shed on her sorrowful eyes, and she slept.

Then the bow did the swineherd take, and was bearing it unto
 the king ;

But there burst an angry shout from the suitors all about ; 360
 And the flash of a fierce threat brake through the thunder of clam-
 ouring :

"Whither art bearing the bow, thou caitiff swineherd-loon ?

Truant !—the hounds shall devour thee amidst the swine-pens soon !
 In a lone place, even by the teeth of the hounds thou hast fed shalt
 thou die, [high."

If Apollo show grace unto us, with the rest of the Deathless on
 And the swineherd faltered, and laid down the bow even there
 where he stood ;

For their multitude made him afraid as they shouted in furious mood.

Then sternly, nothing dismayed, did the prince Telemachus say :
 "Bear onward the bow ! Thou shalt find many masters are ill to
 obey !

Have a care lest, young though I be, to the field I chase thee away,
 Yea, pelting thee hence with stones :—I trow I am stronger than
 thou. [now

Ah would that in might of mine hands I were so much stronger
 Than all the suitors whose feet unbidden trample our floor !

There be some that in sorriest plight I would soon send forth of my
 door :

They should flee far away ; they should travail with mischief here
nevermore."

Loud laughed that reckless train his helpless anger to see,
And they could not choose but refrain from their wrath for their
mirth and their glee.

But the swineherd is hastening through the hall with the bow, and
he stands

By Odysseus the war-wise king, and he giveth it into his hands :
Then he calleth the nurse Eurycleia without, and thus saith he : 380
" Eurycleia exceeding-wise, Telemachus biddeth thee [close ;
That thou shut the doors of the chamber, massy and bolt-gripped
And if from within they shall hear any groaning or clashing of
blows [door,

In the place of the chambers of men, they shall not stir forth of the
But there shall they tarry in quiet, and heed their toil as before."

So did he speak, neither passed that word light-flitting away :
But she locked the bower-doors fast—lo, the net is enclosing the
prey !

Forth of the banqueting-hall sped Philæti^{us} silently,
And the gate in the strong-fenced wall of the forecourt fastened he.
And a rope in the porch hath he found, a hawser of byblus-cord, 390
And he lasheth the gate-posts round therewithal ; and aback to the
board [betide :

And aback to his seat hath he hied, and he waiteth what next shall
Watching Odysseus he sat. Now the hero was handling the bow,
Looking keenly on this side and that, slow turning it to and fro,
Lest worms should have eaten the horn while its lord was far away.

And they glanced at each other in scorn, and mockingly one 'gan
say : [of touch !

" What, our knave is a chapman of bows, shrewd-eyed and cunning
Or belike mid his treasures at home he hath even another such :
Or his wrightship is minded to make one,—lo, how to right and to
left

He turns it about in his hands, the vagabond knavery-deft ! " 400
And thereafter another cried, as they sneered in their spite and
their pride :

" May the varlet light on advantage, and prosper even so [bow ! "
As the strength of his arms shall avail for the stringing of yonder
So the laugh and the jeer rang out, but Odysseus the manifold-
wise,— [his eyes,—

For by this had he turned it about, and had heedfully scanned with
Even as a man that can skill to play on the lyre and to sing,
On a new-fixed peg at his will full easily stretcheth the string,
Straining the sheep-gut taut, having tied it above and below,
So laboured Odysseus naught, but—lo, he hath strung the bow !
With his right hand thereafter to try it he twangeth the fateful
string : 410

Clear-sweet to his touch as the cry of a swallow in chase did it sing.

Started the suitors with sore dismay: they grew white with their
dread. [Zeus overhead.

Through the hush came the crash and the roar of the thunder of
Then bounded the heart and rejoiced in the woe-worn hero divine,
That Kronion the thunder-voiced spake forth to him, sending a sign.
And a swift-winged shaft hath he ta'en that lay bare on the board
by his side,

—But the rest of the speeders of bane in the hollow quiver abide;
And their deadly-bitter taste full soon the Achæans shall know:—
Now on the string hath he placed it; now is he drawing the bow
Even from his seat on the chair; and he speedeth the arrow's flight,
Aiming it straight and fair: through the axe-heads all forthright
Hath it leapt: it hath missed not one, but clear through the twelve
rings flying [crying:

The brass-heavy arrow hath gone; and the king to his son spake
“Thy guest in thine halls that sitteth, Telemachus, shameth thee
not!

No whit have I missed the mark, neither wearied me long, I wot,
Toiling in stringing the bow; but unbroken abideth my might.
Not in this shall the suitors condemn me, for all their scorn and
their spite.

But now is it time to prepare them a supper, yea, ere night:
And to make them sport thereafter with feast-tide revelry-play,
With song and the voice of the string; for the crown of the banquet
are they.” 430

Then bent he his brows for the sign: swift girdeth about him his
sword

Telemachus, son of divine Odysseus the dauntless lord:

And his spear hath he gripped in his hand, and now at the side of
his sire [as fire.

By the throne hath he taken his stand with his war-weapons flaming

BOOK XXII.

Of the Slaying of the Suitors.

BUT Odysseus the crafty hath flung from his body his rags; and
lo, [and bow.
On the threshold-stone hath he sprung; in his hands are the quiver
Forth of the quiver the fleet-winged arrows abroad hath he poured,
Scattered in front of his feet, and he shouteth a mocking word:

“So at last is the ordeal dread of the archery-contest o’er.
Now will I see if a mark, such as no man hath smitten before,
May be hit by my shaft, if Apollo vouchsafe me renown once more.”

As he speaks, on Antinous up to the head is he drawing the
shaft:—

Of the beautiful chalice-cup in a moment more had he quaffed:
The red gold handles shine in his hands as he lifteth it high 10
To drink of the flame-flushing wine:—full little he thinketh to die.
For who would have dreamed it, that one in the midst of a ban-
- queting throng,

Facing a host, alone—yea, though he were never so strong—
Would have fashioned a murder so grim with black horror of doom
for him?

On to his throat hath the keen arrow flashing unerringly fled
From the hand of the hero, and clean through his throat hath the
point of it sped. [on the floor:

Backward he reeled, and the cup, from his hand dashed, clanged
Suddenly spiriting came up through his nostrils the red-rushing
gore [board,

In a thick-welling jet; and he spurned with convulsive foot at the
That the table was overturned and the meats on the pavement were
poured, 20

And with horrible crimson goutts were polluted: and rang through
the hall

The startled tumultuous shouts of the suitors beholding him fall.

Up sprang they with horror-struck faces, and gazed with bewil-
dered stare

At the walls and the naked spaces that mocked them everywhere,
 For gone were the mighty spears : there was nowhere a shield they
 might take. [they spake :

And they stormed at Odysseus in fierce indignation the while, and
 "An evil shot for thyself was this !—thou never shalt try
 Thine accursed skill any more, for now shalt thou surely die !
 For behold thou hast murdered a prince and a great one that had
 no peer [30

In Ithaca's island. For this shall the vultures devour thee here !"
 So cried they, for not of his will, but by foul misadventure they
 deemed [dreamed

That the beggar-wight chanced to kill their best,—fools ! little they
 That the doom-net sweeping adown had enclosed them on every
 side. [cried :

But with death in his terrible frown many-counselled Odysseus
 "Dogs ! and ye said in your hearts I should never come home any
 more

Back from the land of the Trojans ; and rioted, wasting my store :
 Forcing my handmaids ye humbled them, bowing mine house 'neath
 the shame : [came :

What though myself was alive, to my wife with your wooing ye
 Nowise the Gods did ye fear, the abiders in Heaven-palace wide :
 Nothing ye recked of the vengeance or wrath that from men should
 betide ! 40

Now are the meshes of doom drawn about you on every side."

Then their faces were ghastly to see, terror-writhen and white,
 and each eye

Glanced wildly, whither to flee from destruction swooping anigh.

And answered and spake to the hero Eurymachus alone :

"If thou art indeed Odysseus the Ithacan come to his own,
 True is the word thou hast said of the deeds of the suitors' hands,
 Of their riot and wrong in thine halls, of their spoil of thine harried
 lands.

But there is he now laid low, who was guilty of all that was done,
 Antinous : foremost he was, and he set the others on.

Not for the love of thy Queen was he fain to have won her his
 bride, 50

But he coveted other things which Kronion this day hath denied ;
 For he longed in thy stead in Ithaca's fair-citied island to reign,
 And to spread the ambush-net, to the end that thy son should be
 slain. [we—

He hath met his deserts, he is slain : thou then—for thy people are
 Have mercy and spare, and so will we make atonement to thee.

For the bread in thine halls devoured, and for all the wasted wine
 Shall each man bring thee a recompense of twenty kine.

Yea, brass will we pay thee and gold, that thine heart shall be
 warmed : good sooth, [into ruth."

Thou didst well to be wroth at the first, but thine anger shall melt

Made answer to him many-counselled Odysseus with lowering brow : 60

“Eurymachus, though ye would give to me all your possessions now,

All that ye have, and would add to them treasures from elsewhere,
Yet would I nowise withhold from the slaughter mine hands at your prayer,

Or ever I had my revenge for your lawless and tyrannous wrong.

Choose, for the choice is before you, to fight as the valiant and strong, [doom.

Or to flee, if so be any dastard may 'scape from the death and the Ha, but I ween there be none but shall plunge to the netherworld gloom !” [loosened with dread ;

Then their hearts were as water there, and their knees shook,
But again in his great despair Eurymachus cried, and he said :

“Friends, never will yonder man refrain his terrible hands ; 70
But now he hath gotten the well-polished bow and the quiver, and stands

High on the threshold, his hands will be speeding the arrows' flight
Till he slaughter us all from thence,—now nay, let us rise to the fight ! [bane

Draw ye your swords, and uplift for a shield from the speeders of
The tables ; and all in a throng let us have at him, rushing amain,
If so be we may thrust him aback from the threshold and doorway,
and gain

The city, and gather a battle-aid to our rallying-cry : [fly.”

So shall this be the last of the shafts that from yonder hand shall

Leapt up a flash to his hand, as with swift-clutching fingers he drew [flew, 80

From the scabbard his double-edged brand, and at hero Odysseus he
Shouting a battle-cry—lo, on a sudden the twang of the string—
And a shaft from the terrible bow in his breast is quivering ;

And the point standeth deep in his liver : the sword from his hand
hath he hurled

To the floor, and with agony-quiver across the table whirled

He sprawleth with limbs gathered up : he hath spilled on the pavement around [the ground

The meats of his feast, and the cup : with his forehead he smiteth
In his anguish of spirit ; and spurned by his feet as they agonize
Crasheth his throne overturned ; and the death-mist floodeth his eyes.

Then rushing forward to face Odysseus the glorious lord

Amphinomus sprang from his place, and he drew his keen-edged sword, 90

If perchance he would flinch from the pass ; but or ever the foe
drew near

Plunged in his back the brass of the prince Telemachus' spear

'Twixt the shoulders, and onward the bloodthirsty point through his
breast-bone tore.

And he fell with a heavy thud, and his brow smote flat on the floor.

Then Telemachus darted away from him, leaving the long-shadowed spear

In the corse, for he dared not stay to pluck it from thence, for fear
Lest one of the suitor-band, as he tugged at the brass, might leap
And thrust him through with his brand, or smite with a sword-edge-sweep. [side;

So he turned him, and swiftly he fled from the corse to his father's
And the rush of the winged words sped from his breathless lips, and
he cried : 100

"Father, forthright will I bring thee a buckler and lances twain,
And a helmet of brass close-lapping thy temples, a warder of bane.
And I will array me in war-gear, and give to the swineherd-wight
And the neatherd to arm them withal : it is best to be harness-dight." [to his son :

And Odysseus the manifold-counselled made answer and spake
"Run thou and bring them, or ever the last of mine arrows be gone ;
Lest they force me away from the door, who are many, and I but
one."

Then hasted the son to obey his dear-loved father's word :
To the chamber he gat him, where lay the war-clashing harness
stored. [flame-gleaming. 110

Four spears from the glittering store hath he ta'en, four shields
And brazen morions four, with their dark plumes heavily streaming.
And swiftly again to his dear-loved sire with his burden he came :
And himself first clad him in gear of battle, in brazen flame.
And withal the henchmen dight them in glorious battle-array ;
And there on the left and the right of the war-wise king stood they.

Now the hero, while yet he had store of arrows to guard him withal,
Stood aiming the shafts, evermore smiting foe after foe in his hall :
And man upon man fell fast of the panic-huddled band.
But the arrows failed him at last, and the archer must stay his hand.
Then he set up the bow that had done its work by the door-post
tall, 120

Where the sunlit side-walls shone at the entering-in of the hall.
Then over his shoulder he threw the fourfold shield broad-spread,
And a well-wrought helmet he drew down over his gallant head.
Terribly noddeth the mane of the crest overglooming his brow ;
And brass-tipt lances twain in his grasp are quivering now.

Now high-pight up from the ground was a postern door in the wall
Where the basement-plinth ran round the stately-pillared hall ;
Therewithout was a corridor, barred by a folding-door's strong frame ;
And the king had appointed to guard it the swineherd, to watch
the same,

And to stand with his weapons beside it, and keep the one strait stair.

Then loud Agelaus cried unto all the quailers there : [130
"Friends, is there none that will climb unto yonder postern-door,
And tell it without to the people, and raise the rallying-cry ?

So never shall yonder archer shoot an arrow more."

But to him the goatherd Melanthius answering made reply :
 " Agelaus, it may not be ; for the fair hall-door of the house
 Is terribly nigh, and the corridor-entrance is perilous ;
 And one man stalwart and dauntless might hold it against us all.
 Go to, I will bring to you armour to harness yourselves withal [140
 From the armoury-chamber : for not without the palace, but here,
 I ween, did the king and his son put by the battle-gear."

Then did the goatherd thrall Melanthius stealthily clamber
 Through the rafter-gaps of the hall to Odysseus' armoury-chamber.
 Twelve shields hath he snatched from the wall ; he hath ta'en twelve
 lances tall,

And helmets as many, with hair-crests over the brass thick-tossed.
 And he hasted aback, and he bare them and gave to the suitor-host.
 Then did his strong knees fail Odysseus, his bold heart shivered
 When he looked on them donning the mail, and beheld how the long
 spears quivered

In the hands of his foes ; for he knew that now was he sorely bestead :
 And he turned to his son, and flew the swift-winged words, as he
 said :

" Telemachus, soothly to say, there is one of the women-thralls, 150
 Or Melanthius, kindling the battle against us now in our halls ! "

Outspake to the hero Telemachus wary of wit, and replied :
 " O father, mine own was the oversight ; none other beside
 Is guilty thereof, for the strong-knit door of the armoury
 Left I ajar : it was marked of a watcher keener than I.
 But go thou, Eumæus the godlike, and fasten the door, and give heed
 If a handmaid it be that is helping our foes in our sorest need,
 Or Melanthius, Dolius' son ; for I ween it is he indeed."

Even so communed these twain touching that which were best
 to be done. 160
 But the herdman of goats again to the armoury-chamber is gone
 For the fetching of warrior-gear, and the godlike swineherd spied,
 And he turned to Odysseus—for near was the hero—and hastily
 cried :

" O Zeus' and Laertes' seed of the guile-shifts manifold,
 Lo there that caitiff again, even he that our hearts foretold !
 To the chamber he goeth : but thou give clear behest in this :
 Shall I smite him and slay, if so be that my strength overmaster his,
 Or hale him hither to thee, to the end that the wretch may atone
 For the treason that here he hath plotted, the deeds of outrage
 done ? " [170

Unto him did Odysseus the manifold-counselled answering say :
 " I and my son will hold the arrogant suitors in play.
 They shall not win forth of mine halls, be they never so furious-fain.
 But wrench ye his feet and his hands behind his back, ye twain.
 Cast ye him into the room, lash planks unto ankle and wrist ;
 And make ye fast to his body a cable of hempen twist ;

Then trail ye him up by a pillar, and nigh to the rafters sling,
That alive long time he may hang in agony languishing."

So he spake, and they hearkened with heed, neither stayed from
obeying the word. [not nor heard;

To the chamber they gat them with speed: he was there, but he saw
He was searching the chamber about, to gather him battle-gear store;
And these twain stood without upon either side of the door.

Back over the threshold fareth Melanthius, goatherd-wight,
And a beautiful helmet he beareth in one hand, strong and bright;
In the other an ancient shield, broad, marred with a leprous mould,
Which Laertes wont to wield in his warrior-youth of old.

Unstitched were the thongs; it had lain long time unheeded there.

They have darted upon him and ta'en, and they drag him within by
the hair: [aghast;

Down on the floor have they dashed him, all startled and terror-
And his feet and his hands have they lashed with a galling bond full
fast. [190

Yea, deftly aback did they twine them and knotted, obeying the word
Of Laertes' son, the divine Odysseus, their toil-tried lord.

With a cable of hempen ply his body aloft they swung; [slung;

Up a pillar they trailed him on high, and anear to the rafters they
And a scoff and a triumph-cry at the wretch Eumæus flung:

"Soft lying for thee, Melanthius! Now shalt thou watch through
the night,

Laid on an easeful couch, as for thee it is meet and right:

And for slumber thou shalt not miss when the gold-throned Dawn
upspringing

Comes from the Ocean-stream, what time thou wendest, bringing
Goats for the suitors to feast in the palace revelry-ringing." [200

So there was he left in a bond of despair strained, biding his doom.
Then their harness of battle they donned, and they shut the door of
the room.

And they sped to Odysseus again, to the shiftful in counsel of war:
There fury-breathing and fain of the fight on the threshold stood four,
But many and mighty for bane were their foes on the feast-hall floor.

Ha, who is the fifth drawn near?—Zeus' daughter Athenê is here,
Like unto Mentor in voice, and veiled in Mentor's form!

Then did Odysseus rejoice, and he cried through the battle-storm:
"Mentor, stand up for mine help for the sake of the days gone by!—
For my kindness' sake!—we were boys together, thou and I!"

But he deemed her, even as he spake it, Athenê the battle-aider. 210
Then madly the fierce shouts brake from the suitors, fain to have
frayed her.

And first did Damastor's son, Agelaus, threatening say:

"Mentor, beware lest the words of Odysseus lead thee astray
To cause thee to strike on his side this day, and to fight against us;
For thy purpose shall perish, but ours shall be surely accomplished
thus:

As soon as these, yon father and son, by our hands shall fall,
 Thou too, for the deeds thou art minded to do unto us in the hall,
 Shalt perish, and so shalt thou bring on thine own head bitter reward :
 And when we have reft away your strength with the edge of the
 sword, [220

Thy wealth, even all that thou hast, thy lands and thy treasure-store
 Will we cast with the heap of the spoils of Odysseus : thy sons no
 more [wife's feet

Will we suffer to live in thine halls, nor thy daughters ; thy dear
 Shall never go to and fro any more in Ithaca's street."

But the heart of Athenê burned the hotter for this that he spake ;
 Fierce on Odysseus she turned, and the flame of her scorn outbrake :
 " Odysseus, thy prowess is gone from thee ! Quenched is the battle-
 fire [sire,

That was thine when for Helen, the white-armed child of a glorious
 Nine years with the Trojans thou warredst unblenching evermore,
 And many a hero didst slay in the terrible battle-roar ;

And by thy device was the wide-wayed city of Priam ta'en. 230
 How is it that, now thou art come to thine halls and possessions
 again,

Thou quailst before the suitors, thy spirit is waxen acold ?
 What ho ! come hither, my friend, and stand by my side, and behold !
 Thou shalt see what manner of man is Mentor amidst of the foe,
 How Alcimus' son requiteth the kindness of long ago."

So she spake, yet awhile she denied that the king should be
 victory-crowned : [might,—

But she trieth him yet in the fight, to make uttermost proof of his
 The might of the man toil-tried and his dear son battle-renowned.
 She is gone :—on the smoke-besmirched hall-rafters dusky and dim
 Ye shall see but a swallow perched,—yet Athenê looks down upon
 him. 240

Up sprang Dê móptolemus, and arose Damastor's son,
 Amphi-medon, Eúrynómus, and they cheered the suitors on.
 To the front Peisander hath pressed and Polybus warrior-souled,
 For that these beyond the rest of the suitors were stalwart and bold,
 Even all that were yet not slain, and they fought for their lives in
 despair,

For the bitter arrow-rain had slaughtered the rest that were there.

Out spake Agelaus then to the remnant there arrayed :

" O friends, at last shall yon man's terrible hands be stayed !
 Lo, Mentor hath uttered but empty vaunts, and behold, he is gone ;
 And there at the entering-in of the doors are they left alone. 250
 Now hurl ye your lances—but not in the selfsame instant all ;
 But rather let six of you cast at the first, if so be it may fall
 That Zeus will vouchsafe us to slay this Odysseus, and win us re-
 nown.

Nothing we reckon of the rest, when once this man shall be down."

Then, six together, they darted the long-shadowed lances amain.

But Pallas Athenè thwarted their spears, and she made all vain.
 For one a column hath hit of the stately-pillared hall;
 And into the door close-knit hath it chanced to another to fall;
 And heavy with brass the head of another crashed on the wall.
 Lo, the spears of the suitors are sped, and bootless the cast of them
 all! 260

And cried Odysseus the toil-tried then to his valiant few:
 "Now, O my friends, will I give my commandment also to you!
 Hurl at the throng of the suitors, the felons furious-fain
 To add to their crimes overpast the blood of the true men slain!"

Then were the keen spears sped true-aimed at the hero's command.
 Dèmoptolemus lieth dead by the lance from Odysseus' hand;
 By the prince is Euryades slain, and the swineherd is Elatus' bane;
 And the lance of the neatherd hath hit Peisander, and laid him low:
 Then fell they together, and bit the earth in their agony-throe.
 To the hall's far corner anon the remnant of suitors fled; 270
 And the king and his men rushed on, and they plucked their spears
 from the dead.

And again the suitors darted the long-shadowed lances amain;
 But Pallas Athenè thwarted the more part, making them vain;
 For one a column hath hit of the stately-pillared hall;
 And into the door close-knit hath it chanced to another to fall:
 And the brass-heavy ash of a third with a crash plunged into the
 wall.

Yet the lance of Amphimedon missed not utterly; lightly it grazed
 Telemachus' hand at the wrist, and the face of the skin hath it
 razed: [bore,
 And the spear of Ctesippus sped o'er the shield that the swineherd
 And it scratched but his shoulder, and fled on past, and it fell on
 the floor. 280

Then the folk of Odysseus the war-wise manifold-counselled king
 Their javelins keen once more at the throng of the suitors fling.
 And the waster of tower and town hath stricken Eurydamas down;
 By the prince is Amphimedon slain, and the swineherd is Polybus'
 bane. [spear;

Through the breast of Ctesippus hath crashed the oxen-warder's
 So down on the ground hath he dashed him, and shouteth a triumph-
 jeer:

"O lover of gibes, Polytherses' son, never more at all [thrall!
 Shalt thou bluster with great words, making thy tongue thy folly's
 Have respect to the Gods in thy speech, for what is thy strength in
 their sight? [290

Lo there thy reward for the hoof that thou gavest the beggar-wight,
 When Odysseus begged in the halls wherein all was his own of
 right!" [on,

So spake the warder of wreath-horned kine; but the king rushed
 And his long spear dealt swift death as he closed with Damastor's
 son.

Lo, how Leiocritus reels when Telemachus' lance he feels!
 For from navel to back the thrust through his shuddering entrails
 tore, [floor.

As he fell on his face in the dust, and his brow smote flat on the

Then, then from the rafters' height did Pallas Athenê shake
 Her ægis, and thrilled with affright did the souls of the suitors quake.
 And this way and that from the king they fled, as the cattle flee
 When the hovering gadfly's sting is driving them over the lea, 300
 When the long days come with the Springtide up from the south-
 land sea. [tures swoop

But the king and his folk—as the bow-beaked, crook-taloned vul-
 From the crags on the mountain's brow, on the harmless fowl to
 stoop,

Which, afar from the clouds low-cowering, scurry along the ground;
 But from down-rushing wing and devouring beak no rescue is
 found,

Neither any escape; and with glee are the field-carles watching the
 chase; [place.

So smite they the suitors that flee through the murder-ravaging
 And rang through the slaughter the shriek and the ghastly moan
 evermore, [up from the floor.

As they hacked at their heads; and the reek of their blood steamed

Then rushed Leiôdes, and clasped the knees of Odysseus there,
 And with quivering lips he gasped forth terror-winged words of
 prayer:

"I bow at thy knees, Odysseus, have mercy upon me and spare!
 Never, O never, to one of the maids in thine halls, I swear,
 Have I spoken or done any shame or wrong; but I wont to plead
 With the others, essaying to stay them from evil word and deed.
 Yet they would not hearken to me, to refrain their hands from sin;
 And they ran their folly's race, and a ghastly goal they win.
 But I—I have been but their priest, I have not done anything:
 And lo, I must die: so kindness goeth unthanked, O king."

But darkly frowning Odysseus the manifold-counselled said: 320
 "If thou wert the priest of the evil-doers that here lie dead,
 Many a time in mine halls thou couldst not choose but pray
 That the happy hour of my home-return might be far away,
 That my wife might follow thee hence, and my love bear children
 to thee:—

From death the outstretcher in misery-sleep shalt thou nowise flee."
 And his sinewy hand, as he saith it, hath caught up a sword that
 lay

On the floor,—Agelaus in death wild-reeling had hurled it away;—
 Down with a lightning-sweep through the midst of his neck he
 shore; [floor.

And the prayer yet moaned on his lip as his head was rolled on the

But the eyes of the lovely in song not yet had been flooded with
 night,

Of Phémios, who sang to the throng at their feasts in his heart's despite.

But in trembling hands he bore his lyre of the strain clear-ringing,
As he stood by the postern-door; and wavered his thoughts to and fro :—

[clinging
Shall he steal from the hall, and fly to the courtyard, and sit fast—
Unto Zeus the Garth-ward's high-reared altar?—in days long ago
Many thighs had Odysseus the king and Laertes offered there,—
Or rush to Odysseus, and cling to his knees in desperate prayer?
Terror-goaded he thought; and of these him seemed it were better
done

That his hands should cling to the knees of Odysseus Laertes' son.
Then his carven lyre, the soul-enchanter, laid the bard 340
On the floor betwixt the bowl and a bright throne silver-starred.

And he ran 'neath the sword, and he clasped the knees of Odysseus there;

[prayer :
And with quivering lips he gasped forth terror-winged words of
"I bow at thy knees, Odysseus, have mercy upon me and spare!
Thyself wilt have sorrow and ruth hereafter, if now thou dost slay
A bard that chanteth to Gods and to menfolk his lovely lay.

No man hath taught me : my manifold song-craft came unto me
By the gift of a God, and as unto a God would I sing unto thee.
Ah let not the flame of thine anger be slaked with my blood, O
king!

[thing—350
For I swear—and thy dear-loved son will tell thee the selfsame
That not of my will did I come to thine halls, neither coveting
aught

Day after day at the feasts of the suitors I wont to sing.
They were more, they were stronger than I, whom hither by force
they brought."

And Telemachus' sacred might heard how that suppliant cried ;
And he spake to his sire forthright, as he stood by the hero's side :
"Forbear, neither pierce this man with the brass ; for guiltless is he :
And Medon the herald withal will we spare—who cared for me
Evermore in our halls, when I was but a child, and thou oversea,—
If he have not been slain of the swineherd or neatherd, or crossed
thy path

[the storm of thy wrath."
When the lightnings of death flashed wide through the hall from
So speaks he, and Medon the wise-heart heareth the blessed sound,
Under a throne as he lies, with a new-flayed hide wrapped round,
And shrinking terror-aghast from black death's beckoning finger.

He hath leapt to his feet, he hath cast off the hide ; no whit doth
he linger ;

[machus there,
But he rushed to the prince and he clasped the knees of Tele-
And with quivering lips he gasped forth terror-winged words of
prayer :

[sire
"O friend, I am here !—refrain thee from smiting, and speak to thy
Lest he slay me, now that his might is awakened, his heart on fire,

Vengeance-whetted on those mad fools, that with riot and wrong
Wasted his wealth in his halls, and mocked at thee so long." 370

Smileth upon him Odysseus the manifold-wise, and he saith :

"Be of good cheer, seeing this man hath drawn thee aback from
death, [others this—

To the end thou mayst know in thine heart, and mayst tell unto
How that better by far than the evil dealing the good deed is.

But get you forth of the hall, from the blood of the slaughtered
throng,

And sit ye down in the court, even thou and the glorious in song,
Till I make full end of the work that hath waited mine hands o'er-
long."

So did he speak, and they hied them forth from the hall of bane ;
And they sat them down beside the altar of Zeus, they twain ;
And there terror-dazed ever round them they gazed, in dread to be
slain. 380

Then did Odysseus glare through the hall in the gathering gloom
To behold whether any man there yet shrank from the clutches of
Doom. [of the spoilers

There was none had escaped him ; in gore and in dust lay the host
Heaps upon heaps on the floor, as the fish that the tired sea-toilers
Out of the sea-wash hoar in a many-meshed net have haled

High up on the shelving shore ; and the captives silver-scaled
Lie heaped on the sands, and they yearn for the waves and the dear
cool spray ;

But the pitiless sunbeams burn, and they gasp their lives away ;
So heaped were the carcases one on another of suitors dead.

Then Odysseus spake to his son, and the manifold-counselled
said : 390

"Prithee call hither to me Eurycleia the nurse straightway ;
For mine heart hath gotten a word that my lips in her ears must
say."

So he spake, and Telemachus hied him to do his father's will.
And he smote on the door, and he cried through the halls so fear-
fully still :

"Arise, thou ancient woman, the child of a long-gone day,
Who hast watched with diligent heed the maids in our halls alway ;
My father calleth for thee, for that somewhat he hath to say."

So he spake, neither light-winged sped that word to be wasted in
air ;

But she opened the doors that led from the women's chambers fair ;
And she came,—but Telemachus passed before to the Hall of
Bane,— 400

And lo, the revenge at last, and Odysseus amidst of the slain !
Gore-dabbled and dust-besprent, as a lion he was to see
Coming up from the prey, which hath rent and devoured an ox of
the lea ;

And his shaggy chest all o'er, and his red jaws gnashing grim

Are besmeared and matted with gore,—thou wouldst shudder to
look upon him ;

Even so with his feet all red, and his hands, Odysseus stood :
And she stared at the heaps of the dead, and the measureless rivers
of blood. [wrought ;

Then a shout triumphant rushed to her lips for the great deed
But, even as they parted, he hushed her sternly, and suffered her
not, [spake he : 410

Though her soul was exceeding fain ; and the swift-winged words
“ Rejoice in thine heart, and refrain, neither shout for the victory.
Unholy it is to triumph over a slaughtered foe :

’Tis the doom of the Gods, and their own ill deeds, that have laid
these low ; [contemn,

For all that abide on the earth in their pride would they flout and
The base and the noble alike, whosoever should come unto them.

So they ran their folly’s race, and a ghastly goal they win.

But thou, tell over to me the women mine halls within,

Both them that be daughters of shame, and them that be stainless
of sin.”

Made answer to him Eurycleia the nurse, and thus spake she : 420

“ Yea, O my son, I will tell the tale of them soothly to thee :

Fifty women there be in my lord Odysseus’ halls,

Handmaids, the which we have taught to toil at the toils of thralls,
And to card the tangled fleeces, and under the yoke to bend.

There be twelve that have turned them aside on the paths of shame
to wend ;

No honour they rendered to me, to the lady Penelopë none.

And it is but as yesterday that thy son unto manhood hath grown ;
And his mother would not he should speak to the handmaids a word
of power.

But come, let me now go up to thy wife in her shining bower,
Where a God on her eyelids hath shed sleep-dews in a cool still
shower.”

Unto her did Odysseus the manifold-counselled make reply : 430

“ Wake her not yet ; but bid thou the handmaids hitherward hie
Which have wrought the deed of shame in the hateful days gone by.”

Forth fareth the ancient-hoary handmaid, hastening
To bear to the women the story, and bid them to come to the king.
Then calleth the hero divine his son and the neatherd-wight,
And Eumæus the warder of swine, and he speedeth the winged
word-flight :

“ Be the corpses borne forth now : therein shall the women toil.
And thereafter the beautiful tables and thrones from crimson soil
Shall be cleansed with streams from the fountain and sponges of
manifold pore : 440

And so when the house shall be orderly dight, and pure all o’er,
Ye shall lead the handmaids forth of the stately-pillared hall
To the mid space twixt the dome and the goodly courtyard-wall,

And smite with the keen-edged sword till the shuddering souls shall
fleet

From their limbs, and they quite forget the dalliance shameful-sweet
Which they knew when in secret wise they wont with the suitors to
meet." [fear,

Then the handmaids came to the door, all huddled together for
Wailing and mourning sore, and shedding full many a tear.

First, forth of the hall did they bear the bodies of slaughtered men ;
And under the porch of the fair-walled court they laid them then,
Propped one on another ; and aye was Odysseus speeding them on,
That they could not choose but obey, till the ghastly labour was done.
Then the clots and the stains of slaughter from throne and from
burnished board [pored.

Cleansed they with the bright spring-water and sponges myriad-
Therewithal doth Telemachus toil with the warders of penfold and
stall

In scraping the murder-soil from the floor of the rich-wrought hall ;
And with shuddering these offscourings the maids from the feast-
hall bare, [dight fair.

Till the stains of the sword's devourings were cleansed, and the place

Then caused they the women to come from the stately-pillared hall
To the mid space 'twixt the dome and the goodly forecourt wall.

In the strait wall-nook did they pen them, whence none could in any
wise flee : [he :

But the prince bethought him then, and thus to his friends spake
" By none save an unclean death will I take their lives away

Which have poured reproach on mine head and my mother for
many a day, [play."

And have dallied o'erlong with the suitor-throng in their wanton

Then the rope of an azure-prowed ship round a lofty pillar he cast :
O'er the peak of the dome did he slip it, and lashed he the ends of
it fast ; [light.

And he strained it up high, that the feet of none on the ground should
And as broad-winged thrushes, or sweet-cooing doves, in their
homeward flight

Dash headlong into a net mid the twilight bushes set, [470

And, as merrily nestward they go, into hatefullest bed they fall,—

So held they their heads arow, and around the necks of them all

The strangling nooses clung, a death most wretched to die.

And their feet for a little—not long—there quivered convulsively.

To the court through the porchway-door Melanthius then brought
they.

With the pitiless brass they shore his nose and his ears away ;

And they tare out his manhood, and flung to the dogs the blood-raw
meat, [his feet.

And with stern hearts anger-stung did they slash off his hands and

Then their hands and their feet from the stain of the blood and the
dust thereon

They washed, and they went in again to Odysseus.

The work is done.

Then to the aged nurse Eurycleia spake the king : 480
 "Bring to me sulphur, the healer of evil, and fire shalt thou bring ;
 To the end that with sulphur-reek I may purify the hall :
 And thereafter my wife and her handmaid-train shalt thou hither-
 ward call. [me."

Bid all mine handmaids throughout mine house that they come unto
 But the dear nurse spake yet again to her lord, and answered she :
 "Yea, well hast thou spoken, my son, and so shall it fall for the best :
 But first let me bring thee, I pray thee, a mantle and tunic-vest.
 Stand not in thine halls with thy goodly shoulders wretchedly dight
 In rags ; for to anger and shame all hearts would be stirred at the
 sight."

Sternly to her did Odysseus the manifold-counselled say : 490
 "First let the fire be brought to me now in mine halls straightway."

So did he speak, and in nought did the ancient nurse disobey :
 But with fire and with sulphur she came, and Odysseus purified
 The hall with the hallowing flame, and the house, and the forecourt
 wide.

Through the fair halls wended the hoary handmaid, hastening
 To bear to the women the story, and bid them to come to the king.
 And they entered, and streaming before came the light from the
 brands that they bore : [fain :
 And around Odysseus they poured, and they greeted him there full
 On the shoulders and head of their lord glad kisses of love did they
 rain, [through 500
 As they clung to his hands ; and a deep sweet yearning thrilled him
 To lift up his voice and to weep ; for he knew they were faithful
 and true.

BOOK XXIII.

Of the meeting of the husband and wife long sundered.

WITH laughter of triumph-glee to the bower is the old nurse gone
To tell to Penelopè that her lord is come back to his own :
And her feet seemed winged as they sped, and no more were the
old knees weak. [she speak :

And she stood by Penelopè's head, and with joy-winged words did
“ Wake thee, Penelopè : wake, dear child, that thine eyes may see
The thing that through all thy days thou hast yearned for wearily.
Odysseus is come ! He hath entered his palace, late though it be,
And hath slain the arrogant suitors that wasted his house, and de-
voured

His goods, and evil-entreated thy son, by their host overpowered.”

But answering her did passing-wise Penelopè say : 10
“ Nurse, nurse, the Gods have driven thee mad ! sooth, mighty are
they

Though a man shall be never so wise, to drive him all distraught ;
And by them is the simple one into paths of prudence brought.
They have caused thee to stumble in mind, who wast erst well-
witted enow.

What dost thou to vex me, who bear a spirit fulfilled of woe,
With these wild words, and hast waked me from slumber sweet and
sound

Which lay like a fetter upon me, and folded mine eyelids round ?

For never gat I such sleep since Odysseus hied him away
To look upon Ilium the cursèd, whose name I loathe to say.

Now get thee hence forthright : go down to the hall again : 20
For if this had been any other of all mine handmaid-train

That had come with such tidings as these, and from slumber had
wakened me,

Right soon had I sent her aback to return in sorrow and pain
To the hall : but for thee—thine age hath won this grace for thee.”

Spake again Eurycleia the nurse, and her voice rang rapture-
wild :

"O darling, I mock thee not! but indeed and in truth, dear child, Odysseus is come, and hath entered his own house, even as I say: For this was the stranger whom all men scorned but yesterday. Yea, and the hero's return hath been long time known to thy son: But he hid his father's counsel, and spake thereof unto none, 30
Till the hour of revenge for the deeds that the arrogant suitors have done." [sprung,

Joy-thrilled with a wild heart-throb from her bed hath the lady And with passionate tear and sob to the ancient woman she clung: And she cried, as from breathless-eager lips the winged words flew: "O tell me—oh prithee, dear nurse—speak out, and answer true:— If indeed he hath come to his own, if now in his palace he stands, How on the shameless suitor-throng could he lay his hands, Being one and alone, but they were a crowd in our halls away?"

But in answer to her did the dear nurse Eurycleia say:
"I saw not, I heard not; only there came as from far away 40
A groaning of men being slain:—but we were sitting aghast
In the innermost chamber, and strong-knit doors there prisoned us fast;

Till at last thy son Telemachus called to me out of the hall,
Bidding me come, for his father had sent him forth to call.
And there in the midst of the slain my lord Odysseus I found
Standing with carcasses strown on the trampled floor all round.
One on another they lay: thine heart would have glowed to see
How gore-bedabbled and dust-besprent, as a lion, was he.
But now, by the fore-court gate is the crowd of their corpses lying;
And the fair-dight palace with sulphur-reek is he purifying. 50
For he lighted a mighty fire, and hath sent me to call thee in.
Come with me, and so in your heart of hearts ye twain shall win
Unto bliss for the manifold ills ye have suffered in days overpast.
Long time have we waited, but now is the wish fulfilled at the last.
Alive hath he come to his hearth, he hath looked on thy face again,
He hath seen his son in his halls; and on all the suitor-train,
In the house where they evil-entreated him, vengeance for wrong
hath he ta'en."

But cheerless of cheer made answer Penelopè passing-wise: [eyes!
"O boast thee not yet, dear nurse, neither laugh with triumphant
For, as touching my lord's appearing, thou knowest how welcome
were this

Unto all, but most unto me and my son, my child and his;— 60
But no, ah no! it is no true word that thou comest to say:
But one of the Deathless Ones hath been moved yon suitors to slay,
Wroth for the heart-stinging outrage and wrong wrought day by
day. [contemn,

For all that abide on the earth in their pride would they flout and
The base and the noble alike, whosoever should come unto them.
Therefore their folly hath brought them to bane: but Odysseus—
nay,

He hath lost his return to his land : he hath perished far away."

But again made answer to her Eurycleia the nurse and said :

" My child, what saying is this through the fence of thy teeth that hath fled ? [shore."

' Never ' thou saidst, ' will my husband come back to his fatherland— Yet he sat by thine hearth,—O thine heart ! it is slow to believe evermore.

Lo now I will tell thee a sign whereby thou shalt surely know—

The scar which the white-flashing tusk of a boar dealt long ago :

This I espied in washing his feet, and fain was I

To have told thee ; but swiftly his hands on my lip had stifled my cry,

And he suffered me not to speak, for that wary-wise is my king.

O come ! I will hazard my life on the truth of the tale that I bring,

If thou find me a liar, slay me then by the wretchedest death."

But Penelopè passing-wise maketh answer again, and she saith : 80

" O nurse, it were hard for thee, be thou never so manifold-wise,

To spy out the hidden counsels that Gods everlasting devise.

Howbeit in anywise down to my son will we pass, that so [low."

I may look on the suitors dead, and the man that hath laid them

She went down from her bower ; and her heart to and fro was

wavering still : [will,

For awhile shall she hold her apart, and enquire of him all that she

Or in loving embrace cling fast to him, kissing his hands and his head ?

O'er the threshold of stone hath she passed : on the feast-hall floor

doth she tread :

And she sat down face to face with the king, by the further wall,

In the light of the hearth-fire's blaze : but her lord by a pillar tall 90

Sat with his eyes down-cast, ever waiting one word from her,

From the wife that beheld him at last, after many a weary year.

Long sat she and made no sign, and her spirit was stilled with amaze.

And now she uplifteth her eyne in an earnest straining gaze ;—

Now fall they—she knoweth him not for the rags that his goodlihead

hide. [and cried :

Then Telemachus' heart grew hot, and he chode with his mother,

" My mother, unmotherly mother, who bearest a cruel heart,

Why turn'st thou away from my father, and sittest in silence apart ?

And thou car'st not to know—thou hast nothing to ask of the long-

lost now ! [100

None other woman on earth would have hardened her heart as thou,

To stand from her husband aloof, when through manifold troubles

and sore [shore.

He had won in the twentieth year to the home on his fatherland—

But so art thou ever :—thine heart evermore is harder than stone !"

But Penelopè passing-wise made answer, and spake to her son :

" My child, mine heart in my breast is sorely amazed this day :

And I find no word to ask, and I know not what to say :

And I cannot, I cannot look in his face :—but if of a truth

He is very Odysseus come back to his home, we twain, good sooth,
Full well shall be known of each other ere long ; for tokens there be,
Yea, many a hidden sign, that we know, and none but we." 110

So did she answer, and smiled Odysseus the man toil-tried,
And he turned to his vehement child, and with light-winged words
he replied :

"Telemachus, suffer thy mother awhile in our halls this night
To doubt and to prove me : it shall not be long ere she read me a-
right.

But now am I evilly vested in rags and foul to see ;
Therefore she slighteth me, telling her heart that I am not he. [done.
But thou, take counsel with me touching what shall be best to be
For he that hath murdered a man in the land, yea, only one,—
Though but few be the blood-avengers for that slain man that will
plead,— [the deed. 120

Yet the slayer must flee, leaving kinsfolk and fatherland-home for
But we, we have slain the defence of the city, the noblest, I wis,
Of the Ithacan princes : bethink thee, how shall we answer this ? "

And Telemachus wary of wit made answer wisely and well :
"See thou unto this thyself, dear father, for all men tell
How that in counsel the best thou art of mortal men,
And that none may match him with thee in wisdom's eagle ken.
We will follow thee heart and soul ; and I ween in the hour of the
fight

We will fail not in daring and doing, even to our uttermost might."

Answering spake Odysseus the man of the wile-fraught breast :
"Therefore, my son, I will tell how it seemeth to me to be best : 130
First shall ye go to the bath and shall clothe you in tunics gay,
And speak to the maids in our halls that they dight them in festal
array. [hand

And withal shall the glorious bard with his clear-ringing lyre in his
Awake with his strains the feet of the merry dancing band ; [sound
That folk may say, 'Lo, a bridal is there,' if it chance that the
Should be heard of the wayfarer passing, or them that be dwelling
around ;

That the rumour may not go forth through the city far and wide
Concerning the suitors' slaying, or ever myself shall have hied
To my vineyards and orchard-acres, and there with diligent heed
Will we look unto this, what help Allfather will send in our need."

So did he speak, and with right good will heard they and obeyed.
Straightway they bathed, and in bright-hued tunics their bodies
arrayed. [skilled

And the women put on their attire, and the heaven-taught songcraft-
Hath taken the hollow lyre, and the hearts of them all hath he
thrilled [dancing.

With the ecstasy-rush of the song, and their feet with a passion of
And the great hall throbbed and rung with the fall of the feet white-
glancing,

As the ring of the men and the gay-girt maids swung lightly round :
And thus did the isle-folk say, from without as they hearkened the
sound :

“ Hark ! verily some one is wedding the world-wooed queen this day !
Out on her ! seemed it a hard thing on to the end to stay, 150
Her lord's house-warder, till came the hero from far away ? ”
But they saw not the ghastly pile of the slain by the forecourt-wall.

Now the great-heart hero the while is gone to the bath in his hall :
And Eurynomê bathed him there, and with oil she anointed her king,
And around him a mantle fair and a tunic-vest did she fling ;
And Athenê down from his head a glory of beauty shed,
And taller and broader he seemed, and the wealth of his wavy hair
Over his shoulders streamed as the hyacinth's purple rare.
And even as a craftsman wise that Hephæstus and Pallas have taught
Full many a cunning device, of whose hands rare treasures are
wrought, 160

With the sheen of the gold overspread will a vessel of silver encase,
So on his shoulders and head did Athenê shower down grace.

And forth of the bath is he gone : lo, fair as a God he shows :
And he sat him down on the throne whence a little ago he rose.
But nothing she spake nor stirred : and he cried, an indignant word :
“ Strange woman ! the Deathless Ones that abide in the halls of
heaven

Beyond all women to thee an adamant heart have given ! [striven,
There is none other woman whose heart with the olden love had
To stand from her husband aloof, when through manifold troubles
and sore [shore ! 170

He had won in the twentieth year to the home on his fatherland-
Nurse, prithee spread me a couch, I will lay me down to my rest
Alone ; for surely of steel is the heart in Penelopê's breast.”

But Penelopê passing-wise unshaken answered the king :
“ Strange man ! I am not high-minded, nor count it a little thing,
Nor am wonder-dazed ; but I know what manner of man thou wast,
When the long-oared galley that bare my lord from Ithaca passed.
Eurycleia, prepare him a couch ;—let the strong-knit bed be brought
Out of the stately bower that himself in the old days wrought.
Therewithout be the strong-knit bed set down and with bed-gear
strewed, [180

With fleeces and mantles enow, and with bright rugs lovely-hued.”

So spake she the testing-word for her husband,—Odysseus started,
And indignation-stirred he cried to the queen wise-hearted :

“ Lady, a heart-stinging word and a cruel is this thou hast said !
Who hath elsewhither moved my couch ?—good sooth, he were hard
bestead,

Were he never so cunning—save haply a God himself came there,
Who would lightly uplift at his pleasure and set down elsewhere ;—
But no man living, though never so stalwart-young were he,
Would lightly upheave it ; for there is a sign and a marvel to see

Done in the carven bed ; I wrought it, and none beside.

There grew in the courtyard an olive with long-leaved arms spread
wide, 190

In its fulness of growth, and in girth as a pillar of this mine hall.
And I built me a chamber about it, and wrought till I finished the
wall

With goodly stones close-ranged, and meetly I roofed it above,
And enclosed it with doors well-joined ; strong-knit were the beams
thereof.

And thereafter I lopped the long-leaved olive's hoary crown ;
And I rough-hewed all the trunk, and with brass did I smooth it
down,

Featly and cunningly, for I laid the plummet thereto. [through.
So I shaped me a bedpost, and bored it with augers through and
And therewith I began my bed, and I fashioned it fair to see
With curious work of gold and of silver and ivory. 200

And bright thongs dyed with purple I stretched across below.

Lo this for a token I tell thee ; albeit I do not know
If my bed stand fast in its place, or a busy mar-craft there
Have hewn through the stump of the olive and set it elsewhere."

O knees that as water are weak, O heart's shield suddenly broken !
Who save Odysseus could speak it—the spell of the secret token ?
She stayed not, but weeping she sped to him ; dear loving arms
hath she flung [as she clung :

Round the neck of Odysseus, his head she kissed, and she cried
" O lour not upon me, Odysseus—thou knowest—thou needs must
know, [woe, 210

Who in all things art wisest of men !—but the Gods have meted us
Who begrudged that from life's sweet morn we twain, ever side by
side,

Should pace to the threshold of eld, to a love-litten eventide.

O be not indignant for this, O let not thine anger be hot [thee not !
That when first I beheld thee with suchlike greeting I welcomed
For shuddered mine heart in my breast with a sickening fear alway
Lest a stranger should come, and with false words cozen and lead
me astray.

There be many that seek after gain by the wicked wile and the lie.
O never Helen the Argive, the child of Zeus most high,
With a man of an alien folk in the bed of love had lain,
Had she but known that the sons of Achaia, the battle-fain, 220
Would follow to bear her aback to the home from whence she came.
Of a truth 'twas a Goddess that moved her to do the deed of
shame—

For not until then had she nursed that folly within her soul,
That bitter infatuate folly, beginning of all our dole.
But now,—forasmuch as thou tellest a token clear as the light
Concerning the bed unseen of any living wight
Save only of thee and me, and but one of my maidens beside,

Actor's child, who was given by my sire long ago to thy bride,
 Who hath warded with diligent heed the doors of our bridal bower—
 O husband, the hard heart yields to believe in this sweet hour !” 230

Then thrilled in his heart and his eyes a passion of crying yet
 more,

And clasping his winsome-wise belovèd, he wept full sore.
 O sweet as the first far sight of the land unto them that swim,
 Whose ship by the Sea-god's might on the wild sea stormrack-dim
 Hath been split by the mad wind's roar and the shock of the surge
 down-crashing, [hoary-dashing,

And but few have swum on to the shore through the wave-crests
 With the salt from the leagues of sea overcrusting their bodies
 around, [ground ;

And with rapture from bane they flee, and they tread on the blessèd
 So joyed that wife to behold her beloved, with white arms flung
 Round his neck, and she could not unfold them, but lovingly, lov-
 ingly clung. [lingered,

And now had the Rosy-fingered beheld them as weeping they
 But Athenè the flashing-eyed willed not that this should befall :
 For she caused that the night should abide in the West ; and she
 stayed withal

The Dawn by the ocean afar, and suffered her not to yoke
 The fleet-footed steeds of her car, light-bearers to all Earth-folk,
 Lampus and Phaethon hight, the steeds that the Day-dawn bring.
 Then thus, in the hush of the night, to his wife spake that wise king :

“ Wife, we have not attained to the end of our strife by this.
 There are toils for the days to be—a measureless store there is—
 Many and hard : I must pass through all to the uttermost. 250

For this was foretold unto me of the seer Teiresias' ghost,
 In the day that I hied me down unto Hades' twilight hall
 To enquire of the home-return of my men and mine own withal.
 But come, let us get us to bed, my wife, that so we twain
 May sweetly be lulled in the bosom of sleep the assuager of pain.”

Then spake unto him Penelopè passing-wise again :

“ Thy bed shall be dight what time soever thine heart is fain
 Of thy rest ; for behold, the Deathless have brought my king once
 more

Back to thy fair-built palace, back to thy fatherland shore. [260
 But now—forasmuch as a God hath awakened remembrance so—
 Tell me what labour remaineth : methinks one day I shall know,
 And nowise worser is it that the tale be told straightway.”

Then did Odysseus the manifold-counselled answering say :

“ Darling, what hast thou to do to require this thing of me?—
 Yet will I tell thee thereof ; I will hide no whit from thee. [heart
 Thy spirit shall nowise be gladdened : the shadow thereof on mine
 Darkly and heavily hangeth. He bade me afar to depart
 By many a city, and carry a well-poised oar with me, [sea,
 And to journey until I should come to a folk knowing nought of the

Who use not to mingle the savour of sea-born salt with their meat,
And who have no knowledge of galleys with bows of crimson dye,
Nor of oars fair-balanced, the wings wherewithal o'er the waters
they fly.

And he told, and I tell thee, the sign of the goal of my wandering
feet :—

I shall meet in the way as I go another wayfaring man
Who shall say that I bear on my shining shoulder a winnowing-fan.
There in the ground must I plant the well-poised oar that I bring,
And offer a sacrifice fair to Poseidon the Earth-shaking King :
A ram, and a bull, and a boar, and then must I turn back home,
And there to the Gods everliving must offer a hecatomb,
Unto all in the order due, that dwell in the heaven's broad dome. 280
And at last in a good old age shall death come to me out of the sea,
Softly, so softly, and painlessly laying his finger on me
Overborne by the weight of years bliss-laden, my people around
Happy. Of all these things, said he, should fulfilment be found."

Made answer with words of cheer that fair wise-thoughted wife :
" If the Gods vouchsafe thee peace for the eventide of life,
Good hope is thine to be safely brought out of peril and strife."

So in the hush of the night wise words and loving were said ;
The while Eurynomê dight with the ancient nurse their bed
By the flaming torches' light, and with soft bed-gear hath she
spread. 290

So they strewed with diligent haste the bright-hued rugs thereon :
And forth hath the old nurse passed, and unto her rest is she gone.
Then to their chamber they came, and Eurynomê paced before :
As the banner of love streamed the flame of the torch that the
bower-maiden bore : [in :

But she stayed at the door, and departed, and they twain entered
Ah, fain were the weary-hearted to love's twin-rest to win !

And by this the prince and the neat-herd wight and the swine-
herd withal [hall.

Break off the dance, and the feet of the women are stilled in the
And they hie them to sleep where the shadows deep on the cham-
bers fall.

Now when those long-sundered had ta'en sweet solace of love's
delight, 300

Communed they together again, for their hearts were full that night.
And the lovely lady told of the dark days weary-long,
When she looked on the manifold foul deeds of the suitor-throng ;
How the glutton for her dear sake had devoured the sheep and the
kine, [wine.

How, the quenchless thirst to slake of the drunkard, flowed the
And the hero spake to his wife of the smiting of hosts of foes,
And of all his desperate strife in stemming the tide of woes.
And she heard in a trance of deep delight, and never descended
On her eyelids the dewfall of sleep, or ever the tale was ended.

He told of the blood-stained strand where he smote the Ciconians ;
 then 310

Of the perilous fruitful land of the Lotus-eating men.

And he spake of the Cyclop's cave, and of that grim vengeance
 wrought [not ;

On the fiend that devoured his brave war-fellows, and pitied them
 Of the moaning isle where the Wind-ward gave strange help for the
 way,—

Yet it was not his weird to find for many a weary day
 Sweet fatherland, but the sweep of the wings of the hurricane bore
 Far away on the fish-fraught deep the wanderer groaning sore ;
 And he told of the giants' wide-walled Læstrygonian town,
 And the slaughter-crimsoned tide where his galleys and men went
 down, [fraught hour ; 320

Where none save the galley that bare him escaped in the death-
 And he told her of Circe's snare, and the witch-wife's magic power ;
 And how to the sunless coast, and to Hades' mansion drear
 He sailed, to enquire of the ghost of Teiresias, Theban seer,
 And beheld in the shadow-land there war-fellows of brave days gone,
 Yea, looked on the mother that bare him and nursed him a little one ;
 How weirdly the song-flood rolled when the lips of the Sirens chanted,
 Of the Wandering Rocks he told, of Charybdis terror-haunted,
 And of Scylla the grim crag-fiend, by whose lair pass scatheless none ;
 And he told how his shipmates sinned when they slaughtered the
 kine of the Sun ; [brand 330

And how Zeus, that rolleth his thunder on high, with his smouldering
 Shivered the galley in sunder, and perished his gallant band
 All in a moment, and only himself from their doom might flee ;
 And he came to Calypso's lonely isle in an unknown sea, [for aye
 And she kept him there, for her will was to have him her husband
 In her rock-hewn caves ; and still would the love-lorn Goddess say
 That his youth-tide never should fail with her, nor his death-day
 come ;

But all was of no avail, for the leal heart longed for home ;
 And how the Phæacian shore, after manifold troubles, he trod,
 And they loved him exceeding sore, and honoured him even as a god,
 And lent him a galley to go to his own dear fatherland, 340
 With goodly raiment enow and with brass and gold in his hand ;—
 But he dreamily murmured there, for that sleep slid down upon him,
 Lulling the spirit from care, soft-smoothing the weary limb.

But Athenê the grey-eyed hasted to do yet more than this :
 When she deemed that Odysseus had tasted his heart's desire of bliss,
 In the arms of his wife enfolden, and lapped in happy sleep.
 Then from Ocean she speedeth the Golden-throned to climb Heaven's
 steep,

To bear unto menfolk light : eftsoons doth Odysseus wake ; [spake :
 And he sprang from his couch forthright, and his hest to his wife he
 “ Wife, we have drained out a cup overbrimming with toil and pain :

Thou, weeping with heart-sick yearning to see my face again, [350
While Zeus and the rest of the Gods with a tribulation-chain
Have fettered mine eager feet far off from my fatherland-shore.
But seeing we twain have come to our dear, dear bed once more,
Unto thee I commit my goods in mine halls to order and keep.
And forasmuch as the suitors have wasted the flocks of my sheep,
Some will I get me in foray, and some shall my folk restore,
Whose sons were the robbers, till full shall my folds be, like as
before. [depart,

But myself to my vineyards and orchard-acres this morn will
To look on my father,—ah me, he is stricken with anguish of heart !
Thou, hearken my hest, albeit thyself art wise, I trow : [360
So soon as the sun shall be risen, abroad shall a rumour go
Concerning the suitor-rout, whom I in my halls have slain.
Go up to thy bower, and there abide with thine handmaid-train :
And from looking forth thence upon any, from asking of tidings,
refrain."

Eftsoons as he spake did he don his flashing battle-gear ;
And he gave command to his son and the warders of swine and steer
To gird them with war-array, and to take their weapons in hand.
And they all made haste to obey, and they dight them with harness
and brand. [370

And they opened the doors, and forth they hied them ; Odysseus led.
And by this was there light on the earth : but Athenê around them
shed

The veil of a cloud for a night-black shroud, from the town as they
sped.

BOOK XXIV.

How the suitors were brought down into Hades, and
Odysseus and the kin of the slain were set at one again.

THEN from the light of the day the souls of the suitor-band
Did Hermes summon away ; and his golden rod in his hand,
The Wand of the Spells, hath he ta'en, that charms into slumber
deep

Whomsoever he will, and again it breaketh the bands of sleep.
Therewithal doth he drive them and herd them : with gibbering low
they follow :

And even as bats in a weird vast cavern's twilight hollow
Flutter around faint-squealing, when breaketh the cluster that hung
All day from the dim rock-ceiling, wherefrom the foul things clung,
Even such was the sound of their crying ; and Hermes went ever
before, [10

As adown mirk pathways flying they swept to the sunless shore.
By the lone White Rock are they gone, by Ocean's sleepless streams,
They have passed by the gates of the sun, they are come to the
land of dreams.

Eftsoons is the drear goal won, the Meadow of Asphodel,
Where the souls of the toil-fordone, the strengthless phantoms dwell.

There, grand in the gloaming dim, was Achilles the mighty-souled,
And Patroclus beloved of him, and Antilochus valiant of old,
And Ajax, a stately ghost, who in goodlihead once outshone
All men in the Danaan host save matchless Pelides alone.
And these were drawn to the side of the peerless in battle-pride ;
And out of the nethergloom one heart-stricken with anguish rose, 20
Agamemnon, Atreus' son ; and a throng was around him of those
In Aegisthus' palace that died with their lord to his doom betrayed.
And the shade of Pelides cried unto Agamemnon's shade :

“ Atreides, we counted thee dear unto Zeus the Thunder-lord
Evermore above all the heroes in that long leaguer that warred ;
For that thou over hosts upon hosts of mighty men didst reign
In Ilium-land, where strove the Achæans with toil and pain.

Yet was it fated that Doom should first unto thee draw nigh,
Even Death the Destroyer, whom none of the children of women
may fly.

Alas, that it was not thy weird, in the flush of thy royal power, 30
In the land of Troy as a king to meet King Death in his hour.
Then had the host of Achæans the death-rites rendered to thee,
Yea, thou hadst won great fame for thy son in the days to be!—
Ah no, thou wast doomed to be trapped in a death-gin wretchedly."

Answered and spake unto him the spirit of Atreus' son:

"Blest scion of Peleus, Achilles, thou godlike peerless one, [fray
Who didst perish from Argos afar, and around thee maddened the
Of Achæan and Trojan slaying to win that glorious prey;
Mighty thou lay'st as the mighty should lie, with the whirlwind of
war [car. 40

Tossing round thee the dust, and forgattest the rush of thy battle—
So we grappled the livelong day, and we had not refrained us then,
But Zeus sent a hurricane stilling the storm of the battle of men.
But when from the fight to the ships we had borne thee through
desperate toil,

We laid thee down on a couch, and with steaming water and oil
Cleansed we thy goodly limbs; and we shed full many a tear
Over thee, and their long-flowing hair did the Danaan princes shear.
And thy mother came up from the waves with the deathless Maids
of the Sea;

And the sound of the cry of them rang o'er the great deep awfully.
And on all the Achæans came there a shudder of mighty dread:
Upstart they all, and now to the hollow ships had they fled; 50
But a hero withheld them, in manifold ancient wisdom wise,
Nestor, whose counsel aforetime was ever the best in their eyes:
And his voice of good cheer pealed far through the storm of the
trampling and cries:

'Refrain you, ye Argives, ye sons of Achaia, forbear to flee!
Lo, his mother comes up from the waves with the deathless Maids
of the Sea,

To the great death-greeting of him who is passing gloriously.'
Then ceased the fear of the mighty-hearted Achæan men.
And the hoar Sea-ancient's daughters gathered around thee then
Mourning with wails heart-piercing, and wrapped thee in raiment
divine:

And there moaned an answering dirge from the sweet-voiced Muses
nine: 60

And there hadst thou seen no face of an Argive but streamed with
tears, [our ears.

So enthralling the clear-ringing voice of the Muses thrilled through
Night and day we bewailed thee for seven days and ten,
Both deathless Heaven-abiders and deathling children of men.
On the eighteenth day to the fire we gave thee, and round thy bier
Slew many a fatling sheep, and many a wreath-horned steer:

Thou wast burnt in the robes of the Gods, with ointment around
 thee streaming,
 And amber honey, while heroes in battle-harness gleaming,
 Footmen and horsemen, clashed as the wavering flames shot high,
 And the thunder-roar of a countless host rolled up to the sky. 70
 When the Fire-god's breath had consumed those glorious limbs of
 thine, [shine,
 O Achilles, we gathered the flame-bleached bones in the morning-
 And in pure wine laid them and ointment : a lovely golden vase
 Of thy mother was given : the gift, said she, of the Wine-god it
 was, [renowned :
 Which the hands of Hephæstus had moulded, the God-smith craft-
 There are thy white bones lying, Achilles glory-crowned.
 There mingled with thine are the bones of Patroclus, the loved and
 lost ; [most
 But Antilochus' bones elsewhere, the man that thou honouredst
 Of all thy companions, save only the dead Menæteus' son.
 And around them we heaped up a barrow, a great and a goodly
 one, 80
 By the countless hands of the spearman-host of the Argive land,
 High on a windy foreland on broad-flowing Hellespont's strand,
 A beacon afar to be seen over weltering leagues of sea
 By the men of the days that are now, and the children of days to be.
 And thy mother asked of the Gods, and for prowess of hero and
 king
 Glorious prizes she set in the midst of the athlete-ring.
 Oft hast thou looked on the honours that fall to the war-renowned,
 When a battle-stricken king lieth down in his great earth-mound,
 And the young men gird them, and gleam the prizes in goodly
 array : [beheld that day, 90
 But at this hadst thou marvelled the most, could thine eyes have
 What glorious prizes for thy sake Thetis the silver-shod
 Set in the midst,—thou wert passing dear unto many a God.
 Yea, and not even in death hast thou laid thy glory down,
 But peerless amongst all men evermore is thy renown.
 I knitted the war-skein up, but wherein was my joy or my gain,
 Seeing Zeus in mine home-returning doomed me to bitter bane,
 By the hand of my murderous wife and her paramour to be slain ? "
 So stood the heroes there communing of things gone by.
 But the Guide, the Argus-slayer, by this is drawing nigh :
 And the dark throng after him swept of the foes that Odysseus had
 quelled. 100
 And to meet them these twain stept, in amaze at the thing they be-
 held.
 Then Lord Agamemnon's ghost knew one of that shadowy host,
 Seeing Melaneus' dear-loved son, far-famous Amphimedon, there ;
 Bond-friends in the earth-days gone in his Ithacan palace they
 were :

And the spirit of Atreus' son first spake unto him and said :
 " What evil mischance hath brought you to this mirk land of the
 dead,

All chosen men like-aged ? though a city were searched all through
 For the goodliest men therein, they had chosen no other than you.
 Was it Poseidon that met you tracking the printless way, [110
 And smote you by armies of winds and the long sea-rollers' array ?
 Or were ye by foes in the midst of a foray o'ertaken and slain
 As ye swept the cattle and fatling sheep from the harried plain ?
 Were ye warring for some strong city or some fair woman again ?
 Tell me, I pray thee : thy bond-friend I am, as on earth erewhile.
 Remember how I came to your halls in Ithaca's isle,
 And with me Menelaus the god-strong, to cause Odysseus to come
 Unto Ilium with us in well-benched galleys over the foam.
 And a whole month fled or ever we passed the broad sea-tide :
 So hardly we won City-waster Odysseus to fight on our side."

Outspake Amphimedon's ghost to the ghost of the hero then : 120
 " O Atreus' son, far-famed Agamemnon, monarch of men :
 All that whereof thou hast spoken remember I full well ;
 And the story of all these things unto thee will I faithfully tell,
 In what fashion the evil accomplishment of our death was wrought.
 The wife of Odysseus the long-lost hero wooing we sought ;
 And she, albeit she loathed this marriage, refused not nor gave,
 For her thought was to bring us to doom, and to thrust through the
 gates of the grave.

Yea, this thing too she devised of her wiles, our hearts to deceive :
 She set up a stately loom in the house, and began to weave ; [130
 Broad, fine of thread, was her web, and straightway to us she said :
 ' Youths, suitors to me, since verily godlike Odysseus is dead,
 Tarry, how eager soe'er for my bridal, until I have wrought
 A shroud,—for I would not the work of mine hands should come to
 nought,—

A winding-sheet for the hero Laertes, against the day [away ;
 When the baneful doom of the outstretcher Death shall snatch him
 Lest Achaia's daughters at me should in indignation be loud,
 If he, after all his wealth, should be lying without a shroud.'
 So did she speak, and lightly consented our lordly will.
 So through the day at the great tall web was she weaving still ;
 But at night she unravelled it all, with the torches beside her set. 140
 Three years by her wiles were we baffled, and none mistrusted her
 yet.

But it fell, when the fourth year came, as the seasons onward passed,
 And many a day was born and died, and the months fled fast,
 Then one of her maidens, who knew full well, revealed it at last ;
 And the while she unravelled the web, we suddenly came on her
 there :

So perforce must she bring the work to an end, how loth soe'er.
 And she showed us the mighty web, when the weaving all was done,

And she washed it, and bright as the face of the sun or the moon it shone.

Then, then did Odysseus return, led on by a fiend-god's hand ;
And he came to his swineherd's hut in the uttermost part of the land. 150

Thither the dear son came of Odysseus the hero divine,
For from sandy Pylos he fared in a black ship over the brine ;
And these for the host of the suitors plotted a grim doom there.
And thereafter on to the city far-renowned they fare ;
But Odysseus the last, for Telemachus led the way before :
But the swineherd guided the hero, and evil attire he wore
In semblance like to a beggar wretched and eld-forlorn,
Propped on a staff, and arrayed in foul rags tattered and torn.
Was none of us all that might know him who came in such strange
guise

All unforeseen, not they that were older and warier-wise. 160
Him did we buffet and pelt, and with words of shame revile.
But the king endured all this in his halls for a little while ; [word,
For he hardened his heart to bear foul buffet and heart-stinging
Till the counsel of Zeus the Aegis-tosser his spirit stirred.
Then he and his son took up the beautiful weapons of war :
In a chamber they stored them away, and the doors thereof did
they bar.

Then in his fulness of craft he gave to the queen his behest
To give to the suitors the bow and the hoary steel for the test,
For the ordeal,—nay, for the doomed the beginning of murdering !
Was never a man of us all could prevail to strain the string 170
Of the mighty bow, for our thews too puny by far were found.
But at last to the hands of Odysseus the giant bow came round.
Burst from us all a thunder of threats and of fierce shouts there :
' Let no man give him the bow, though he plead with many a
prayer !'

But Telemachus only withstood us, and stoutly he gave command.
So godlike Odysseus the toil-tried took that bow in his hand,
And lightly he strained it and strung, and shot through the iron
lane. [of bane,

And he leapt on the threshold, and poured at his feet the speeders
Terribly glaring around ; and he shot Antinous dead.

And thereafter the arrows of anguish at one and another he sped 180
With murderous aim ; fast fell they in panic-huddled flight.

Then was it known that a God was helping our foes in the fight :
For fury-flushed through the hall they rushed slaying left and right ;
And rang through the slaughter the shriek and the ghastly groan
evermore [from the floor.

As they hacked at our heads, and the reek of our blood steamed up
So, Agamemnon, we died ; and our corpses yet lie there
In the halls of Odysseus, unpitied, forlorn of the death-rite care ;
For nothing as yet do his friends in each man's dwelling know,

Who would wash from the gaping gashes the blood's black-clotted
flow, [the dead.]

And would lay them on biers and lament, for the honour is this of

And the ghost of Atreus' son unto him made answer and said : [190

" O happy Odysseus the shiftful, O blest Laertes' son !

With mighty manhood-prowess a virtuous bride hast thou won !

What an excellent spirit was found in noble Penelopë,

Icarius' child !—how clave she unto the memory

Of Odysseus her wedded husband ! Therefore her love's renown

Never shall die ; but the Deathless shall crown her with song for a
crown,

That all men shall bless the constant-hearted Penelopë's name.

Ah, not as Tyndareus' daughter, who wrought the deed of shame

And murdered her husband !—a byword, a song of evil fame 200

Shall she be among men : she hath poured upon all other women
dishonour, [her.]

Yea, though a woman should do good deeds, that stain will be on

So of their griefs are they telling with voices that hollowly sound,
Standing in Hades' dwelling, the caverns underground.

But forth of the city afield are the king and his henchmen gone

To the acres goodly-tilled which Laertes' self had won,

Wresting the fertile ground, sore toiling, from moorland and wood.

There was his homestead ; around it the huts upon all sides stood,

The huts where ate and slept, and in noontide-heat sat still [210

The thralls that Laertes kept, and that faithfully wrought his will :

And an ancient handmaid there, a woman of Sicily's race,

Ever served him with loving care in the lonely upland place.

Then Odysseus turned him and spake to his son and his hench-
men twain :

" Now shall ye enter the well-built house and there remain :

And there shall ye slay for our nooning the best of the swine
straightway.

But for me, I will go to Laertes the old, and will make assay

If my father will know, if his eyes will kindle beholding his son,

Or if I shall be as a stranger, who many a year have been gone."

So spake he, and straightway cast to the thralls his battle-gear.

Into the house they passed eftsoons ; but the king drew near 220

To the fruitful vineyard, fair with the green vines' ordered rows.

And he spied not Dolius there, as he passed through the great
fruit-close, [all

Neither one of the old carle's sons, nor a hind, but gone were they

For to gather them fencing-stones for the gaps in the vineyard wall :

And with these was their old sire gone for an overseer and a guide.

But his father all alone in the fair-terraced garth he espied.

A vine-stock there was he hoeing, in earth-stained tunic clad,

Patched over, unseemly showing, and round his ankles he had [230

Leathern buskins, by reason of briar and thorn that shrewdly
tore :

Hedgers' gloves on his hands had the sire, and a goatskin bonnet he wore, [more.

For he dight him in evil attire, that his sorrow might rankle the
Now when that drear sight was beheld of Odysseus the king toil-worn,— [borne,—

That old man stricken with eld, and with weight of his woes over-
He stayed him under a pear tall-grown, for with tears was he blind.
And a little he wavereth there in the thoughts and intents of his mind,

Whether to kiss him and cling to his dear-loved head, and to tell
Of the end of his wandering, and how his return befell,
Or with questioning first to test if the old man's heart would know.
And in this wise it seemed to him best, as he turned it to and fro,
With speech heart-thrilling to try him, and hold him awhile in play.
And the hero divine drew nigh to the Eld-forlorn straightway. [240
There stood he stirring the ground at the roots with low-bowed head ;
And his brave son battle-renowned stood hard by his side, and he said :

“ Old sire, thou art no lack-knowledge in tending the orchard-close,
But the work of thine hands goeth well ; there is nothing therein
that grows,

Neither seedling, nor figtree, nor vine, nor any olive nor pear,
Nor a plot of herbs in the garden, that hath not known thy care ;
This too will I tell thee, and let not thy spirit be angered for this,—
Sorry enow is the care that is taken of thee, I wis : [ly to see. 250
Thou art wretched with eld, and unkempt, and thy garments unseem-
Not for a slothful servant thy lord neglecteth thee !—

Yet nothing appeareth in thee of the thrall or the underling
In stature and goodlihead, for thou seemest a very king.
Thou art like unto such an one that should bathe at his pleasure
and eat,

And anon lie softly ; for this for the stricken in years is meet.
But come now, answer me this, and the truth thereof declare :
Whose thrall art thou, and what man's orchard knoweth thy care ?
And tell me the truth, to the end I may know this certainly,
If indeed I am come unto Ithaca : so was it told unto me
Of a man that I met by the way but now, as I hitherward hied, 260
But a dull-witted wight : for he found no answer, the churl tongue-
tied— [asked him this

Yea, he stayed not to hearken my word—when I fain would have
As touching mine ancient friend, if alive in the land he is,
Or if he be dead, and a dweller in Hades' dwellings drear.

Lo, now will I tell it again unto thee : thou mark me, and hear.
A man was my guest in mine own dear land in the good days gone,
Which had come to mine house, and dearer than he hath there never
been one

Of all the outland folk that have come to my palace-hall :
And he named him an Ithacan born ; he spake unto me withal

Of his father Laertes, Arkeisius' son, the island-king. 270
 I took to mine halls the hero with princely welcoming,
 And entreated him lovingly, giving of all my store the best ;
 And I gave him the gifts that are meet and right to bestow on the
 guest.

Out of my treasures I brought seven talents of fine-wrought gold ;
 And I gave him a bowl of massy silver flower-bescrolled ;
 Twelve mantles of single fold, and as many tapestries,
 And beautiful cloaks as many, and tunics as many with these ;
 And besides all these, four women, in lovely loom-work wise,
 Comely withal, for himself chose them that were best in his eyes."

Maketh answer his father, while fast and faster his hot tears flow :
 " Yea, stranger, yea ; thou art come to the land of the which thou
 wouldst know.

But tyrannous scorners be there, and the froward rule in the land.
 Vain were thy presents, all vain the untold gifts of thine hand ;
 For if thou hadst found him alive in the Ithacan land this day,
 Then with a goodly requital of gifts had he sent thee away,
 And with good guest-welcoming, paying the debt of thy kindness of
 old.

But answer me, answer me this, and let all be plainly told :
 How many years ago was he in thine halls received,
 Thine hapless guest, my son—ah mine, if ever he lived !—
 The evil-fated ? Afar from his friends and his fatherland 290
 The fish in the sea have devoured him : it may be on some wild
 strand

The ravens have pecked his eyes, and the beasts of the field have
 torn ; [mourn ;
 And never did we that had borne him array him for burial, and
 Never his bride, rich-dowered Penelopë steadfast and true,
 Wailed for her lord on the bier, as is meet for a wife to do,
 When his eyes she had closed ; for that is the meed of the dead
 which have died.

Now answer me truly this, that mine heart may be certified :
 Who art thou, and whence among men ?—thy city and parents
 where ? [ward fare
 Where now is the swift ship moored in the which thou didst hither-
 With thy godlike fellows ? Or cam'st thou a passenger over the sea
 In another man's ship, which departed as soon as they landed
 thee ? "

Unto him made answer Odysseus the full of devices, and spake :
 " Touching all these things unto thee an answer of truth will I make.
 Out of Alybas came I, wherein I dwell in a far-famed hall ;
 Polypemon's son Apeidas the king my father I call ;
 And my name is Eperitus. Over the sea was I tempest-tossed,
 Driven by a God from Sicania, loth though I was, to your coast ;
 And my galley afar from the city is lying off the shore.
 But as touching Odysseus thy son, it is four full years, and more,

Since the time when he turned from my fatherland's halls and gat
him away ; 310

The evil-fated !—and yet had he birds fair-boding that day
On the right : I rejoiced for the same, and I bade him good-speed
full fain.

Blithe-hearted he went, and we hoped one day to meet again
With feastful cheer and with giving of splendid gifts—in vain ! ”

Then a black cloud sorrow-fraught enshrouded the old man round.
With both his hands hath he caught up the ashes and dust from the
ground, [ing again.

And he showered them down on his hoar head, groaning and groan-

Then the heart of the son yearned sore, and a sudden throb of
pain [see.

Through his nostrils thrilled sharp-stinging, his dear-loved father to
And he fell on his neck, and clinging he kissed him, and loud cried
he : 320

“ My father, my father, lo I, even I, am thy long-sought son !

At the last in the twentieth year to my fatherland-home have I
won. [and wail !

O refrain thee, refrain thee from tears, and from this strong crying
For behold I will tell thee—good sooth, I must needs make speed
with the tale !—

I have slain them, yea in our halls have I slain the suitor-throng,
And requited their heart-stinging scorning and all their tyrannous
wrong.”

But Laertes stared all 'wildered, and answered doubtfully :

“ If thou art very Odysseus my son returned unto me,
Show me a manifest token that I may be certified.”

Then Odysseus the manifold-counselled spake unto him and re-
plied : 330

“ Lo there—first mark with thine eyes this scar—dost thou know it
again ?— [glen,

Which was gashed by the white-flashing tusk of a boar in Parnassus'
In the land whither sent of thee and the lady my mother I came
To Autolycus sire of my mother, the gifts of his words to claim,
Which he promised when hither he fared, and plighted his troth
thereto.

Yet again, if thou wilt, I will tell thee the trees the orchard through
Which thou gavest to me long ago, when I asked thee of all things
there,

The lad running after thy steps through the garden everywhere :
And we passed through the selfsame trees : thou didst tell me the
names of them then. 340

Ten apple-trees gavest thou me, and pear-trees three and ten,
And fig-trees forty ; and fifty rows of the vine didst thou name,
Saying ‘ These do I give thee ’—the ripening season of none was
the same. [thereof,

And of manifold kind are the clusters that hang on the branches

When the seasons with sunshine and rain beat down in their strength from above." [broken,

Lo how his knees wax weak, how the strength of his spirit is Who heareth Odysseus speak that sure and certain token!

Around his beloved he threw his arms; and the toil-tried son [one. Close, close with his strong clasp drew to his breast that fainting But when he again breathed free, and his spirit revived in him, Answering then spake he with a new fear dawning dim: 350

"Allfather, ye Gods of a truth in Olympus on high yet abide, If the suitors indeed have atoned for their folly and tyrannous pride. But now am I sore afraid lest the Ithacans all straightway Come up against us, and speed forth the tidings to bring the array Of the folk of the Cephallenian cities on every side." [plied:

But Odysseus the manifold-counselled spake unto him and re- "Nay, be of good cheer, let thy spirit be nowise careful for this. But let us away to the house, for anigh to the orchard it is:

Thither I sent before me the neatherd and swineherd-wight, [360 With my son Telemachus, there to make ready a meal forthright."

So when they had talked, they twain to the fair house took their way: [that lay.

And they came to the homestead again mid the beautiful meadows Telemachus there, and the neatherd withal, and the warder of swine Were carving the stintless meat and were mingling the flame-flushed wine. [toil,

But Laertes the mighty-souled was refreshed the while from his Being bathed by the handmaid old and anointed with glistening oil, And was clad in a goodly cloak; and Athenê drew nigh unto him, And for that good shepherd of folk she swelled each kingly limb, And she moulded him broader to see and taller than theretofore; And forth of the laver went he, and his dear son marvelled sore, 370 For the old man seemed to the sight as the Gods that for ever abide; [cried:

And sped the winged word-flight from his lips, and astonished he "Sooth, father, one of the Deathless that dwell in the halls of the skies

Hath made thee grander in stature and goodlihead to our eyes."

Answered and spake unto him Laertes the ancient-wise:

"Ah Zeus Allfather, Athenê, Apollo, that this might befall, That as he who laid Nericus low, the city of stately wall, On the mainland ness, when I ruled the Cephallenian men, That I in our hall yestreen had been such an one as then, [380 With my shoulders in battle-gear clad, to have stood by thy side in Beating the suitors back; full many a strong one's might [the fight Had I unstrung there in thine halls, and thy heart should have glowed with delight." [rest

In such wise father and son were communing, the while the Wrought till their labour was done, and the flesh for the feast all dressed.

Then sat they down to the meat in order on settle and chair,
 And they put forth their hands for to eat :—lo, cometh another
 Dolius the old ; and his tall sons weary with labour done [there,
 Follow after him into the hall, for to call them their mother had gone,
 The aged Sicilian dame which provided them meat, and aye [390
 Cherished their sire's bowed frame and the dear locks silver-grey.
 Now when these cast eyes on the king, and were ware of Odysseus
 their lord,

They stood sore marvelling ; but Odysseus cried from the board,
 And his words of kindly cheer rang blithe through the shadowy
 halls : [my thralls ;

“ Old sire, sit thee down at the meat, and forget your amazement,
 For that long have we waited a-hungred here, and restrained our
 will [still.”

To put forth our hands to the meat, for we tarried your coming

But with outstretched hands forthright to the hero Dolius sped ;
 And he grasped and he lovingly kissed Odysseus' hand at the wrist ;
 And fluttered the winged word-flight from his trembling lips, and
 he said :

“ My lord and my love—to the hearts that longed for thee sore thou
 art come ! 400

Ah, we thought not to see thee ;—the Gods themselves have sent
 thee home !

All hail unto thee ! all bliss may the Gods upon thee bestow !

Yet answer me truly this, to the end I may surely know,—

Doth Penelopè passing-wise know certainly touching my lord,
 How that home thou art come, or send we a messenger thither-
 ward ? ”

Answered and spake unto him Odysseus the counsel-fraught :

“ Old man, she knoweth ;—what need that for such things thou
 take thought ? ”

Then in the polished chair the ancient sitteth him down ;

And the sons of Dolius there press round that chief of renown ;

And they bid all-hail to the king, to his hands do they lovingly
 cling : 410

Then arow at the board they sat by their father, the white-haired
 thrall ;

And a glorious feast was that in the happy-murmuring hall.

But Rumour the messenger sped through the city on every side,
 Crying “ The suitors are dead, and a terrible death have they died ! ”
 And at once all heard the tale, and from all parts gathering
 Came the people with sighing and wail in front of the house of the
 king.

And they bare forth mournfully those corpses, and laid in the grave ;

But the slain of the lands oversea unto fisher-folk they gave

In the ships swift-faring to go unto each man's town with the dead.

But themselves heart-anguished for woe thronged all to the folk-
 mote-stead. 420

And so soon as the great town-square was filled with the gathering folk,

Arose Eupheithes there in the midst of them all, and he spoke ;
For a burden of grief undying on that lone heart was lying
For Antinous, him that first by the hands of Odysseus died ;
And the tears for his dear son burst forth afresh, to the folk as he cried :

“ O friends, a horrible deed to the people hath this man done !
Some led he away in his galleys,—ah, many a gallant one !
The ships hath he lost : and the men—ye shall never behold them again.

Himself is returned :—Cephallenia's noblest sons hath he slain !
Bestir you, or ever this fellow to Pylos hasten away, 430
Or to Elis the sacred, wherein the Epeian lords bear sway.
Let us up, else ever henceforth shall our portion be shame and scorn,

For a mock were this to be heard of them that are yet unborn,
If on them which have murdered our sons and our brethren ruthlessly
We shall not avenge us ! Life should be no more sweet unto me :
Rather forthright would I perish, and hide my shame with the dead.

Up, let us go, lest they 'scape us, and over the water be fled ! ”
So with passionate tears did he cry, and ruth seized all that throng.

Lo, now cometh Medon anigh, and the bard of the heaven-taught song,
From the halls of Odysseus the king, for that sleep from their eyelids had flown. 440

And they stood in the midst of the ring, and amaze took every one.

Then spake unto them the herald, Medon the wary-wise :

“ Ithacans, list to me now : Odysseus did not devise
Aught that was done, except by the will of the Dwellers on high.
For I, even I, beheld a deathless God stand nigh,
Yea, at Odysseus' side,—but as Mentor he seemed to the sight,—
And now as a God immortal was cheering him on to the fight,
And now, as he rushed through the hall, hurled terror the suitors among ;

And fast fell this one and that of the panic-huddled throng.”

Then came upon every one strange awe and pale dismay : 450
And Mastor's ancient son Polytherses began his say,
Who alone beheld the thing overpast and the thing that should be ;
And amidst of the stormy ring with kindly intent spake he :
“ Give ear unto me, ye Ithacan folk, I will utter my rede :
These deeds be the harvest, my friends, but your coward sin was the seed.

For to Mentor, the people's shepherd, and me would ye not give heed

To withhold your sons from their folly, and bridle the lawless deed.
And a horrible thing in their godless recklessness they wrought,

For they wasted the wealth of a prince, and his wife they set at nought ;

And they laughed in their hearts, ' He will never come back any more,' they thought. 460

And now let the past be past :—O hearken my counsel at last !
Let us go not up, lest some by themselves into ruin be cast."

But for answer a mighty roar and a furious war-yell rang :
There were some tarried still, but more than the half to their feet
upsprang ; [rede ;

They would none of his counsel, they heard but Eueithes' vengeful
And forth of the place wrath-spurred for their harness of battle they
speed.

And as soon as they all were dight in their brass-mail flashing bright,
Forth of the town are they gone, they array them in front of the
gate ;

And Eueithes leadeth them on in his witlessness to their fate ;
For he dreamed of revenge for his slain son—ah, but it was not his
doom 470

To return from the battle again, but to plunge to the netherworld
gloom.

But in heaven the while to Kronion Zeus did Athenê cry :
" O Kronos' son, Allfather, who rulest o'er princes on high,
Say, what deep counsel within thy breast doth hidden lie ?
Must there be more of the dread war-shout and devouring sword,
Or ordain'st thou for these henceforth sweet peace and loving ac-
cord ? "

Made answer to her the Cloudrack-herder, the Thundering Sire :
" What aileth thee, O my daughter, to search into this and enquire ?
Was it not thou that devisedst the thing that hath now been done,
That with vengeance for those ill-doers Odysseus should come to
his own ?

Do after thy pleasure ; yet thus it seemeth me best to do : 480

Forasmuch as Odysseus now hath requited the suitor-crew,
Be a sacrifice-covenant made, and let him be their king for aye :
And let us blot out from their hearts the remembrance of the day
When their sons and their brethren were slain, and let there be love
between these,

As of old ; yea, let there be plenty withal, and abundance of peace."

Yet more enkindled now is Athenê the eager-hearted ;
She hath flashed from Olympus' brow, and adown to the earth hath
she darted.

Now as soon as from those at the board all hunger was done away,
A wary-counselling word 'gan Odysseus the toil-tried say : 490

" Let one go forth and behold, lest the foe be already at hand."

Then hied him a son of the old thrall forth at the hero's command,
And he stood on the threshold and gazed ; and lo, they were all
hard by : [cry :

And with swift-rushing words hath he raised for Odysseus a warning

"What ho! they are here—they are close at hand! let us arm us with speed!"

Eftsoons at his cry they arose, and they clad them in battle-weed. Of Odysseus' band were there four: there were Dolius' sons, six men: And Laertes and Dolius the hoar-haired clad them in war-gear then In eld's despite, for that sore need made them fighters again. [500 And as soon as they all had dight them in brass-mail flashing bright, Wide open they fling the doors, and the king leadeth on to the fight.

Then, to their aid drawing nigh, Zeus' daughter Athenê came; As Mentor she seemed to the eye, and withal was her voice the same.

Then did Odysseus rejoice, the hero divine toil-tried: Forthright he uplifted his voice, and blithe to his son he cried: "Telemachus, now shalt thou learn—for thyself art come this day To the place where the dauntless-hearted are lords of the wavering fray—

[fore
Shalt learn not to shame us, the line of thy fathers, which hereto- In prowess and manhood unblenching were peerless the wide world o'er."

[shone— 510
Then Telemachus cried,—and his eyes with the light of battle "Thou shalt see, father mine, an thou wilt, what spirit is in thy son! Bring shame on thy line!—saidst thou?—it shall never be said of me!"

Then the heart of Laertes leapt, and triumphantly shouted he: "What a day have I lived to see, kind Gods!—right joyful am I! My son and my son's son now for the palm of manhood vie!"

Drew nigh to him then and cried Athenê the flashing-eyed: "Arkeisius' son, who art dearer than all my fellows beside, Pray to the grey-eyed Maiden, to Zeus Allfather pray; Then swing up thy long-shadowed spear, and hurl at the foe straightway."

[fire. 520
Then Athenê breathed through his breast, and flamed the battle A moment his prayer he addressed to the Child of the Mighty Sire; And he swung up his arm, and the flight of the long-shadowed lance hath he sped;

And it smote on the morion of bright brass warding Eupheithes' head. Nought it availed him; the spear right on through his brain hath crashed;

Heavily fell he; his gear of battle clanged and clashed.

Then the king and his glorious son on the foremost fighters leap, And with lightning of spears fall on, and with flame of the falchion's sweep.

And now of the rebel array no man had returned that day; But Athenê the grey-eyed Maid, the child of the Aegis-lord, Uplifted her voice, and she stayed them from strife with her warning word:

530
"Refrain you, ye Ithacan folk, from battle bitter and stern: So without blood shall ye part, and a remnant shall haply return." So Pallas Athenê said, and pale fear thrilled them through;

And by reason of ghastly dread from their hands their weapons
flew,

That they clattered and clashed on the ground as the great voice
pealed thro' the strife.

To the city they turned them round, each man sore fain of his life.
But from godlike Odysseus rang a terrible battle-cry ;

And he crouched to the leap, and he sprang, as an eagle that
swoops from on high.

Then hurled Allfather, to stay him, his bolt of the levin-fire ; [540
And it fell at the feet of the Grey-eyed, the Child of a mighty Sire.

Then to Odysseus cried Athenê the flashing-eyed :

“ O Zeus' and Laertes' seed, Odysseus shiftful at need,

Refrain thee ! Withdraw thine hand from the struggle of bickering
war,

Lest thou waken the wrath of Kronion, Zeus who beholdeth from
far.”

So cried she : forthright he obeyed ; ah then did his spirit rejoice ;
For in shape as of Mentor arrayed, and speaking with Mentor's voice,
Athenê the Warrior-maid, the Child of the Aegis-lord,
By covenant-peace made hatred to cease in loving accord.

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